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# THE POETRY OF SIR THOMAS WYATT

## A SELECTION AND A STUDY

BY

E. M. W. TILLYARD

UNIVERSITY LECTURER IN ENGLISH AND LATE FELLOW OF
JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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# PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to call attention to an author who, though sometimes appreciated justly, has never really received his due. Wyatt to the general literary public is still the importer of the Sonnet into England, and the author of some half a dozen lyrics that deserve a place in the anthologies. In reality he is something more: a man of remarkable character, part of which has been made accessible to us through the medium of a number of short poems. Less precisely he can be called an important lyric poet.

To further my aim two things seemed necessary: a new anthology and a new appreciation.

Selections from Wyatt exist within anthologies of Tudor lyrics, but they are not full enough to give an adequate idea of him. On the other hand, the complete works can be unduly forbidding. Most of the poems are apprentice work, and the general reader who attempts the bulk may easily tire of the business of picking out poetry from experiment, and conclude that on the whole Wyatt is rather tedious. A more generous anthology than exists at present seems the required mean between the two extremes.

A fresh appreciation seems no less necessary. One recent writer maintains that "the important thing is that in Wyatt's work the early Tudor found examples of a large variety of verse forms, coldly but carefully worked out", and another does not trouble to exclude Wyatt's lyrics from what he calls "stilted Italianate compositions", which "judged by themselves were worthless". These are not the prevailing opinions, but they show that it is time someone spoke up in Wyatt's praise.

My choice of poems has been ruled by intrinsic merit rather than by historical importance. Few of

the sonnets are included; and it may be remarked that for the sake of his reputation, Wyatt had better not have imported the sonnet into England, for by so doing he purchased a text-book glory at the price of advertising the class of poems that does his poetical powers least credit.

The substance of my appreciation is contained in the section of the Introduction dealing with Wyatt's lyrics and in the notes to the poems; but as a preliminary I have written briefly about his historical position in English literature, and for the sake of completeness I have commented on the other classes of the poems and have added a short biography and a note on the text, the editors and the critics.

The text is taken from the manuscripts direct, or from Flügel's transcripts in *Anglia*, vols. 18 and 19, or from Arber's reprint of Tottell's Miscellany. The forms of words have been kept, but the spelling has been modernised and punctuation inserted. Had the manuscripts been punctuated, I should have hesitated to modernise the spelling. But one must modernise by inserting punctuation if one wishes to present a readable text; and having modernised so far, I can see little point in reading *it* and *ytt*, *for* and *ffor*, *you* and *yow* and so on with no discrimination, as one must if one follows the manuscripts. It is not to be thought that the case for printing Wyatt strictly according to the earliest textual material at all resembles the case for thus printing Shakespeare. I speak of a version intended for the general reader: Wyatt's latest editor, Miss Foxwell, whose edition provides the student with the only sound text of the complete works, was justified in sticking to the spelling of the manuscripts.

As to the arrangement of the poems, those from the Egerton MS. have been kept in their own order, which is probably chronological, except that the

Satires have been put at the end with the Psalms in order not to break the lyrics into two parts; those from other sources, whose chronological sequence is not known, have been inserted among the poems from the Egerton MS. in what seemed the most appropriate order.

Miss Foxwell's edition has been of great assistance. And if I should sometimes express my disagreement with her on matters of interpretation and literary taste, I do not mean that I am anything but grateful for the labour that went to establishing a sound text of the poet's works.

E. M. W. T.

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# CONTENTS


PAGE

PREFACE . . . . . v

ABBREVIATIONS . . . . . xi

INTRODUCTION—

I. Life . . . . . 3
II. Wyatt's position in English Literature . . 13
III. Wyatt's Poems . . . . . 26
IV. Text, Editors and Critics . . . . . 51

SELECTION FROM WYATT'S POEMS—

1. It may be good . . . . . 59
2. Take heed betime . . . . . 60
3. Your looks so often cast . . . . . 61
4. Perdie, I said it not . . . . . 63
5. My galley charged . . . . . 65
6. My love is like . . . . . 66
7. A face that should . . . . . 67
8. Madame, withouten many words . . . . 68
9. And wilt thou leave me thus? . . . . 69
10. Disdain me not . . . . . 70
11. Is it possible? . . . . . 71
12. Forget not yet . . . . . 72
13. They flee from me . . . . . 73
14. There was never nothing . . . . . 74
15. Patience, though I have not . . . . 75
16. Since love will needs . . . . . 76
17. Ye know my heart . . . . . 78
18. I abide and abide . . . . . 80
19. Divers doth use . . . . . 81
20. What no, perdie . . . . . 82
21. When first mine eyes . . . . . 83
22. Tangled I was . . . . . 84
23. Ah, my heart, ah . . . . . 86
24. At most mischief . . . . . 87
25. Marvel no more . . . . . 89
26. Ah, Robin . . . . . 90
27. Though I cannot . . . . . 91
28. To wish and want . . . . . 92
29. My hope, alas . . . . . 94

| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| 30. | What death is worse | 96 |
| 31. | Th' en'my of life | 97 |
| 32. | Spite hath no power | 98 |
| 33. | My lute awake! | 99 |
| 34. | Blame not my lute | 101 |
| 35. | If with complaint | 103 |
| 36. | Since you will needs | 104 |
| 37. | What should I say? | 105 |
| 38. | In eternum | 106 |
| 39. | Longer to muse | 107 |
| 40. | With serving still | 109 |
| 41. | To cause accord | 110 |
| 42. | All heavy minds | 111 |
| 43. | O goodly hand | 113 |
| 44. | If in the world | 114 |
| 45. | Sufficed not, madame | 115 |
| 46. | Most wretched heart | 116 |
| 47. | From these high hills | 118 |
| 48. | Tagus, farewell | 119 |
| 49. | An Epitaph of Sir Thomas Gravener | 120 |
| 50. | What rage is this? | 121 |
| 51. | The pillar perisht is | 122 |
| 52. | Sighs are my food | 123 |
| 53. | Lux, my fair falcon | 124 |
| 54. | Within my breast | 125 |
| 55. | I am as I am | 126 |
| 56. | Throughout the world | 128 |
| 57. | If thou wilt mighty be | 129 |
| 58. | From the First Satire | 130 |
| 59. | The Second Satire | 131 |
| 60. | The Sixth Penitential Psalm | 136 |

SURREY'S EPITAPH ON WYATT . . . . 138

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION . . . . 143

NOTES TO THE POEMS . . . . . 149

INDEX TO FIRST LINES . . . . . 179

# LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Chambers and Sidgwick = *Early English Lyrics*, chosen by E. K. Chambers and F. Sidgwick, London, 1907.

Courthope = Courthope, *A History of English Poetry*, vol. 2, 2nd edition, London, 1904.

Foxwell = A. K. Foxwell, *The Poems of Sir Thomas Wiat*, London, 1913.

Foxwell, *Study* = A. K. Foxwell, *A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems*, London, 1911.

Leland = John Leland, *Naeniae in mortem Thomae Viati equitis*, London, 1542.

Nott = vol. 2 of *The Works of Henry Howard and of Sir Thomas Wyatt*, edited by G. F. Nott, London, 1816.

Padelford = F. M. Padelford, *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics*, in the Belles-Lettres Series, Boston, 1907.

Tottell, or Tottell's Miscellany = *Songes and Sonettes*, printed by Richard Tottell, London, 1557.

A number in brackets inserted after a quotation or title means that the quotation or title belongs to the poem of Wyatt thus numbered in this book.

# INTRODUCTION

# INTRODUCTION

## I. LIFE[1]

OF the three ruling qualities in Sir Thomas Wyatt's character, passion, courage and fidelity, the two last were an immediate inheritance. Sir Henry Wyatt, his father, was the brave and faithful follower through ill and good fortune of Henry Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII. It is recorded that Richard III attempted to detach Sir Henry from his allegiance to Richmond by imprisonment and torture. "Wyatt," he is reputed to have said, "why art thou such a fool? Thou servest for moonshine in the water. Thy master is a beggarly fugitive. Forsake him and become mine. I can reward thee, and I swear unto thee that I will." "Sir," replied Wyatt, "if I had first chosen you for my master, thus faithful would I have been to you, if you should have needed it; but the earl, poor and unhappy though he be, is my master, and no discouragement or allurement shall ever drive or draw me from him, by God's grace." When Richmond had become Henry VII he did not fail to reward his devoted servant, who was raised during the reigns of the first two Tudor kings "from a private gentleman, to a gentleman of the privy chamber; to the honour of a knight banneret; to master of the jewel-house; to treasurer of the King's chamber; to a privy councillor; and the honour of being

one of the King's executors." In a letter to his son Sir Thomas Wyatt speaks with the utmost reverence of his father's piety, fidelity and diligence; and records how after his troubles he prospered "till that well beloved of many, hated of none, in his fair age and good reputation, godly and christianly he went to Him that loved him, for that he always had Him in reverence."

Sir Thomas Wyatt, then, born in the year 1503 towards the end of the reign of Henry VII, must from the first have been trained to the loyal service of the reigning house. His birthplace was Allington Castle in Kent, a property bought by his father out of the proceeds of his employment at court. Of his youth we know nothing beyond a story of his presence of mind when attacked by a lion's whelp, which he had imprudently reared as a pet; his entering St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1515 or 1516; and his forming one of the royal household in the latter year. It is possible that at Cambridge he came to know John Leland, the antiquary and maker of Latin verses, who later wrote a book of elegies on his death. He took his M.A. in 1520 and shortly after married Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Brooke Lord Cobham. The marriage was unhappy: Wyatt was early separated from his wife, for a reason unknown, and refused to support her. His affection and solicitude for his son are shown in the two letters he wrote him from Spain.

After college Wyatt went to court and remained, but for a few brief intervals, in the service of the King for the rest of his life, either at home or abroad. Wyatt was a successful courtier. His father's services to the house of Tudor must have given him a feeling of comparative security in that perilous court, a feeling that may have allowed him to display with perhaps an unusual freedom the talents he possessed. Wyatt united physical and mental excellence. He was a distinguished soldier and a skilled knight, for he was one of the fourteen challengers who took part in a grand and elaborate feat of arms performed before the King on Christmas Day, 1525. He was a scholar, a linguist, a poet and a musician. His physical prowess and the sincerity and modesty of which his writings leave the clearest impression must have mitigated the envy that his superior intellectual powers were bound to excite.

In 1526 Wyatt, aged 23, accompanied Sir Thomas Cheney on his special embassy to the French court. He distinguished himself, for a letter signed by Cheney and the resident ambassador states that Wyatt "hath been at court with us from time to time, and as we think, hath as much wit to mark and remember everything he saith as any young man in England". During this visit to France Wyatt may have come across the poet Mellin de Saint-Gelais, and certainly must have felt some poetic stimulus from the

court of Francis I. His rondeaus and epigrams are the fruits of his French studies.

Next year Wyatt formed part of another embassy, to the Papal court. He was sent on duty to Venice and succeeded in seeing something of Italy privately, visiting Bologna, Florence and Ferrara. Leaving Ferrara he fell into the hands of the Spanish troops of Charles V, but ultimately escaped. How far it was due to this Italian visit that Wyatt introduced into English literature the sonnet, the *ottava rima* and the *terza rima*, is uncertain; but at least the visit must have stimulated him in his desire to reform the English numbers.

During the years 1528 to 1532 Wyatt was employed at Calais, first as "high marshal with a command of sixteen men", then as marshal of the town and marches of Calais. In 1533 he represented his father, now an old man, as Chief Ewer at the coronation of Anne Boleyn, and probably remained at court, till on the fall of the Boleyns (and perhaps as a result of it) he was imprisoned in the Tower in May 1536. What precisely had been the relations of Wyatt and Anne Boleyn is quite uncertain. Scandal, preserved in certain strongly anti-Protestant documents, would have it that Anne was Wyatt's mistress before she married Henry VIII. The charge may be false, but it cannot be absolutely disproved, as Wyatt's latest editor would have it. The two were at certain periods together at court.

That Wyatt's life was not altogether blameless is shown by his admitting in his *Oration to the Judges*, when refuting the charge of misbehaviour with the nuns of Barcelona, "I grant I do not profess chastity; but yet I use not abomination." After all, would one expect a rigid morality from a hot-headed young man at the court of Henry VIII? For hot-headed he was, if we are to believe a letter which records that in May 1534 "there was a great affray between Mr. Wyatte and the sergeants of London, in which one of the sergeants was slain. For this Mr. Wyatt is committed to the Fleet."

However, that anything serious had occurred between Wyatt and Anne Boleyn is unlikely, for in the year Anne was beheaded, 1536, the King honoured him with a knighthood and in the next year appointed him ambassador to the Spanish court. His imprisonment, too, may have been due not to any supposed intrigue with Anne, but to an affray with the Duke of Suffolk. Anyhow, after a month's imprisonment he was released and sent to his Kentish home to "amend his conduct under his father's supervision". Here he remained for nine months, during which he probably wrote his three satires. He may, too, have been through certain mental experiences that induced in him a growing seriousness of mind. Certainly, to meditate on the events in England during the last years, the fall of Wolsey, the King's despotism and caprice, the execution of

Anne, may well have had a sobering effect; and we need not be surprised to find him writing to his son in a strain of moral earnestness but four years after he had had his affray with the sergeants of London.

Wyatt's task in Spain was thankless. He was instructed to establish a genuine friendship between Spain and England, between his own headstrong master and the Emperor Charles V, still deeply offended at the divorce of his kinswoman Catherine of Aragon. Charles, under an appearance of friendship, remained ever hostile. The correspondence between Wyatt and his patron and firm friend, Cromwell, is very interesting for the light it throws on Wyatt's character. It reveals him as careless of his own affairs, which he had left in financial chaos at home, and carelessly generous of his money. "And indeed you had need of friendship," writes Cromwell, "for I have not seen a wise man leave his things so rawly as yours be left": and again, "Your frank gentle heart doth much to impoverish you. When you have money you are content to depart with it and lend it, as you did lately two hundred ducats to Mr. Hobby, the which I think had no need of them." But it is also evident from the correspondence that Wyatt was a bold and able diplomat, wholeheartedly devoted to the interests of his master and his country. So bold was he in defending Henry's breach with Rome that he was in danger from the Inquisition. It is inter-

esting to know that he approved of Henry's trying and condemning to be burnt "a miserable heretic sacramentary"; but his grounds of approval may have been more political than religious.

Wyatt's difficulties were increased by the coming of two special envoys, Haynes and Bonner, who, far from helping him, became his enemies, and after an interval of time caused his imprisonment and trial by their malicious accusations. After about two years as resident ambassador he was recalled, much to his relief. His epigram "Tagus, farewell" commemorates his departure. Returning, he demanded that the charges that Haynes and Bonner had made against him should be investigated, but Cromwell treated them as too trivial to be noticed. For a few months he was able to live at Allington Castle, of which he was owner, as his father was now dead, and to begin to put his affairs in order. Then again he was sent on a diplomatic mission.

Charles V, late in the year 1539, journeyed through France on his way to the Netherlands. His intentions, his negotiations with Francis I and the Duke of Guise, his fears of Henry VIII and of the Protestant princes of Germany, are matters of history and need not concern us here. Wyatt was sent as special ambassador to the court of Charles on its journey to the Netherlands, or bluntly, as a spy on the emperor's movements

and intentions. Some of Wyatt's letters to Henry describing his audiences with Charles and Francis, the difficulties placed in his way, his conjectures about their intentions, are extraordinarily vivid. No wonder that Sir Thomas Wriothesley, writing to Wyatt, says "your first letters sent to the King upon your first access pleased marvellously well". What is most remarkable about these letters is the relish and excitement with which they were written, contrasting strongly with the gloomy tone of the letters from Spain. Wyatt was a man of action, swift in emergency, brilliant at initiating a move, one who delighted to have his intellectual faculties tried. The intrigues and delays of the court of Spain irritated him intensely: in the bustle and movement, the rumours and alarms of Charles's journey through France, he was happy. He read Charles's intentions with clear insight, and realising soon that he could not influence the issue of events, he wrote home begging to be recalled. One cannot help admiring the way in which he faces the truth and unhesitatingly lets his master know the worst.

In May 1540 Wyatt returned to England, to find the fall of his patron Cromwell imminent. He lived the last six months of the year in Kent and probably wrote the Penitential Psalms during them. When Cromwell fell, Wyatt himself was in danger. Bonner, who since his special mission had been made Bishop of London, preferred

a series of charges against him and caused his imprisonment in the Tower early in 1541. The pathetic epigram beginning "Sighs are my food" refers to this imprisonment. After several months he was tried, and by the earnestness, vigour and eloquence of his defence secured his acquittal. This *Oration* has been preserved, and is a fine example of idiomatic and vivid English. Answering Bonner's complaint of having been meanly treated, Wyatt says, "I know no man that did you dishonour, but your own unmannerly behaviour that made ye a laughing stock to all men that came in your company and me to sweat for shame to see you: yet let other judge how I hid and covered your faults." In another place he says: "This upon examining of as many men as have been familiar with me, among whom some words might have escaped me, and sucked out both of them and me with such interrogatories; yet is nothing found in me of treason. Yea! and when there is any toward my master within this heart, a sharp sword go thither withal." This is almost the voice of Demosthenes defending himself against his accuser.

Acquitted, he was once more restored to the King's favour and given public employment. In the autumn of 1542 envoys from Spain arrived at Falmouth, and Wyatt was ordered to meet and escort them to London. On his way to Falmouth he fell ill of a fever and died. He was in his thirty-ninth year.

Of the poets of the English Renaissance, Wyatt, Surrey and Sidney, by their lives and character, seem to approach nearest the contemporary ideal of the scholar-courtier. In Wyatt's character there was that balance of antithetical qualities that seemed to mark the type: genius for action and refined scholarship; impetuosity and the restraint (sometimes) of gentle manners; versatility and fidelity—and above all high ambitions and modesty, for Leland in his *Elegies* on one page compares him to the high-soaring eagle and on the next records that he never grew proud by worldly success and the splendour of the court. But if Wyatt approached an ideal common to the western countries of Europe he is yet most transparently English. He was no Italianate Englishman; his familiarity with foreign ways and tongues implied no surrender of nationality. His general feeling about Spain is very much that of a modern English tourist in the same country who discovers a "mistake" in the change given him by a grave, middle-aged shopkeeper. Honesty, straightforwardness, even bluntness, those were the qualities he prized highest, for all his exotic culture: "Wisdom, Gentleness, Soberness, desire to do good, Friendliness to get the love of many, and Truth above all the rest", are the virtues he recommends to his son. There is irony in these words if it is remembered that this very son was to pay the penalty of death for treason to his sovereign.

## II. WYATT'S POSITION IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

WYATT in his poetry plainly combines two elements—the native and the foreign. He was the heir of an English lyrical tradition; he also let the Renaissance into English verse. But it is not easy to mark the limits. Through exotic ideas in exotic measures he will sound a personal or national note; or, conversely, he will sing the most artificially Italianate love-longings in lyric measures inherited from mediæval England. For instance, in translating Alamanni's *terza rima*, a metre never before used in English, he can adapt sufficiently to cry with a patriotic enthusiasm that has a curiously modern tone:

> But here I am in Kent and Christendom (58);

while the Petrarchian sentiments of

> If willingly I suffer woe,
> If from the fire me list not go,
> If then I burn, to plain me so
> What may it avail me? (28)

are set to a measure common to many of the English carols of the fifteenth century:

> Mary is quene of alle thinge,
> And her sone a lovely kinge.
> God graunt us alle good endinge!
> *Regnat Dei gracia.*[2]

To set limits, then, is difficult, but it is easy to

note the different literary traditions by which Wyatt was affected.

In many of Wyatt's lyrics there is no breach with the English mediæval tradition. He may choose Italian themes; some of his lyrics may be mere exercises: but lyric spontaneity and the intimate connection of words and tune are inherited not from Italy but from England. The simplicity of

> I promised you,
> And you promised me,
> To be as true
> As I would be (37)

carries on the tradition of

> I sing of a maiden
> That is makeles,
> King of all Kinges,
> To her sone sche ches;[3]

and these short lines, so suggestive of music,

> No tiger's heart
> Is so pervert,
> Without desert
> To wreak his ire;
> And you me kill
> For my good will;
> Lo, how I spill
> For my desire! (24)

though conveying an Italian conceit, carry on the tradition of the song-books of the early sixteenth century.

The note of lyric spontaneity, entering English

about the end of the thirteenth century with the Cuckoo Song [4] and with "Bytuene Mersh ant Averil" and the other poems of the Leominster Manuscript,[5] was never forgotten in the intervening centuries. It appears in some of the carols of the fifteenth century, and that it had not been lost in the generation before Wyatt is shown by such a poem as "Western wind, when will thou blow".[6]

The close connection of words with tune, found in several of Wyatt's lyrics, was derived partly from Wyatt's own musical skill but largely (as Sir E. K. Chambers [7] has pointed out) from the revival of English music that occurred at the court of Henry VI and is associated with the name of John Dunstable. Although the full impetus of this musical revival slackened after Dunstable's death, the interest of the English court in music did not perish, and is reflected in the song-books of the time of Henry VII and Henry VIII. The words in these song-books are rarely of much value, but what is so striking about most of them is their dependence on music or even their subservience to it. The following lines, for instance (in spite of the topical reference), scarcely exist but for the tune to which they are set:

Above all thing
Now let us sing
  Both day and night.
Adieu morning;
A bud is springing,

Adieu, now let us sing,
A bud is springing
Of the red rose and the white.[8]

Similarly several of Wyatt's lyrics almost force the suggestion of a tune on the reader, for instance "Perdie, I said it not" (4), "All heavy minds" (42) and "If with complaint" (35); Wyatt's invocations to his lute are by no means fictitious.

But Wyatt's debt to the early Tudor song-books does not end with these two lyrical qualities: he frankly writes in their manner, though of course he writes better. The following two verses from the song-books sound very much like Wyatt in his least inspired moments:

Methink truly
Bounden am I,
And that greatly,
To be content,
Seeing plainly
Fortune doth wry
All contrary
From my entent [9]—

and

Oft time for death forsooth I call
In release of my great smart,
For death is end and principal
Of all the sorrows within my heart.
A pain it is hence to depart;
Yet my life it is so grievous
That death is pleasure and nothing noyous.[10]

Such are the English lyrical traditions to which Wyatt was open; what use he made of them and what he added, will be discussed later.

The effect of the non-lyrical poetry with which Wyatt grew up was very different. Professor Saintsbury, in an illuminating interchapter of his *History of Prosody*,[11] points out that the changes of pronunciation that took place in the fifteenth century had entirely opposite effects on different classes of metrical forms. In the light metres they suggested unthought-of subtleties of rhythm without destroying the underlying pattern of a short line. But in the heavy metres they worked havoc, and in particular resolved the five-foot iambic line of Chaucer to chaos. And so it happens that while the English lyric tradition did Wyatt a service, the tradition of other English verse, which was written mostly in a heavy metre, was worse than useless to him: facts that readily explain the ease and mastery of some of Wyatt's verses, the stiffness and puerility of others.

The regular iambic line is a thing so much taken for granted as a corollary of the English tongue that it is hard to conceive a time when men speaking more or less modern English could have no perception of it. The language of Hawes and Barclay is not so very different from ours of to-day, but their sense of rhythm appears simply barbaric. Most ordinary English verse is constructed on the background of a certain fixed pattern. The lines

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank

and

> O monstrous act! Villany, villany, villany!

are as different as they can be except in that the pattern behind them is the same. But when the verse departs too far from the pattern, the sense of regularity on which metre depends is lost and a kind of prose has resulted, as in the work of some of the Jacobean dramatists. The following lines, quickly read, are only with difficulty recognisable for blank verse:

> What excellence of nature's this! Have you
> So perfectly forgiv'n already as to
> Consider me a loss? I doubt which sex
> I shall be happier in. Climates of friendship
> Are not less pleasant, 'cause they are less scorching,
> Than those of love; and under them we'll live:
> Such precious links of that we'll tie our souls
> Together with, that the chains of the other
> Shall be gross fetters to it.[12]

In Hawes and Barclay, too, there is no unifying pattern. If you read one line in a certain way, you will probably find that the next or the next but one cannot be read in that way; and in fact that the only way to read these people's verses is to gabble them breathlessly with the hopeful intention of lighting on four main accents a line. This passage from Barclay's *Ship of Fools* exemplifies the kind of verse that Wyatt was perforce accustomed to:

> But moste I marueyll of other folys blynde
> Which in dyuers scyencis ar fast laborynge
> Both days and nyght with all theyr herte and mynde,

But of gramer knowe they lytyll or no thynge,
Which is the grounde of all lyberall cunnynge;
Yet many ar besy in logyke and in lawe,
Whan all theyr gramer is skarsly worth a strawe.[13]

Even the earliest of Wyatt's rondeaus and sonnets are metrically better than this, but the existence of such writing must have made him initially less critical and more tolerant of harshness. The opening of this sonnet, for instance, is hopelessly rough:

Each man me telleth I change most my devise;
And on my faith, me think it goode reason,
To change propose like after the season;
For in every case, to keep still one guise
Is meet for them that would be taken wise.

Whether Hawes and Barclay were more than a general influence is uncertain. It is possible that the immediate model of such lines of Wyatt as have just been quoted was Chaucer.[14] Wyatt knew Chaucer well, for he imitates him frequently in word and phrase; but like his contemporaries, he must have read him without taking into account the final e's that must be pronounced. Chaucer in Pynson's edition, published in 1526 when Wyatt was beginning to write, has a close metrical resemblance to Wyatt's first efforts in the heavier metres.

From Skelton Wyatt is as far separated as Skelton is from Barclay and Hawes. In one sonnet (18) and in an occasional verse of his lyrics he seems to imitate him; but his lyric achievements and his painful and halting experi-

ments are alike utterly alien from Skelton's fine, headlong, masterful clatter.

Wyatt's roughness can easily be misunderstood by those who forget that there are two kinds of roughness: the unconscious and the deliberate; the barbaric and the cultured; the roughness of Barclay and the roughness of Donne. In Barclay the roughness is no part of the sense; in Donne it is the very stamp of his passion: shift the accent as we will in Barclay's verse, we get no recognisable rhythm; shift it in a verse of Donne that at first sight appears rough, and we get a recognisable, distinctive and highly expressive rhythm. Barclay's couplet

> But of gramer knowe they lytyll or no thynge,
> Which is the grounde of all lyberall cunnynge.

is reducible to no rhythm. At first sight the line of Donne,

> If thou beest borne to strange sights,

the first line of the second stanza of "Goe, and catch a falling starre", seems harsh and out of keeping with the obvious rhythm of the opening line of the poem; but by accenting the words *thou*, *borne* and *strange sights* we not only get a rhythm conformable to that of "Goe, and catch a falling star", but find that the emphasis thrown on *strange sights* (words that have to be long drawn out in pronunciation) is itself singularly expressive of the surprise that strange sights might be expected to cause. The difficulty in

Wyatt's poetry is that both kinds of roughness occur. The quotation given above from "Each man me telleth I change most my desire" is an example of meaningless roughness, but in the line

It was no dream; I lay broad waking,

from "They flee from me that sometime did me seek" (13), there is a deliberate irregularity of rhythm. The strong stresses on *láy broád wáking* create a profound feeling of wonder. It is because this subtle type of metrical irregularity has been confused with experimental clumsiness that Wyatt has sometimes been under-estimated. This confusion is the easier because in most poets (in Shakespeare, for instance) the line of development is from an obvious regularity to a more subtle irregularity: the transition from a gross to a refined irregularity is less easy to detect.

In speaking of foreign literatures I shall mention only the immediate influences. What the song-books of the first years of the sixteenth century, from which he got his lyric tradition, owed to French or to mediæval Latin verse lies outside the scope of these remarks.

The most powerful foreign influence Wyatt underwent was the Italian. Further, it is likely that what really stimulated him was less the specific example of Petrarch than the vigorous belief current in Italy when he visited it, and to a lesser degree in France too, that it was an act of

patriotism as well as a desirable accomplishment in a courtier, to write verse in one's native tongue. It was a belief that inspired Ariosto, the Pléiade and Spenser,[15] and that it was a ruling principle of Wyatt's experiments can be guessed from the way his contemporaries praised him. Leland, the King's Antiquary, himself famous for his Latin verses, wrote in his elegies on Wyatt's death:[16]

> Anglica lingua fuit rudis et sine nomine rhythmus;
> Nunc limam agnoscit, docte Viate, tuam—

and again

> Nobilitas didicit te praeceptore Britanna
> Carmina per varios scribere posse modos.

Surrey, in his fine elegy beginning "Wyatt resteth here" speaks of Wyatt's "lively brain",

> . . . where that some work of fame
> Was daily wrought *to turn to Britain's gain.*

If it was patriotic to write well in the English tongue, it was doubly patriotic to write in an Italian or French form, to show that an English poet could compete with the foreigner on his own ground. Hence the injudicious admiration of Wyatt's contemporaries for the sonnets and the Penitential Psalms. By the sonnets he matched himself with Petrarch and his imitators, by the Psalms with Marot and Aretino.

But whatever was Wyatt's motive for imitating the Italians, and even though their example is most clearly seen in some of his worst poems, he

benefited by his contact with Italy. It was probably the stimulus he felt from that contact, the impulse to take literature seriously, to take pains (even with a trifle) that enabled him to transform a trivial lyric tradition into something more vital.

Of the Italian poets it was Petrarch whom Wyatt copied most freely. From Petrarch he derived the sonnet and certain conventional sentiments, which, once introduced into English love poetry, formed its staple subject-matter, with certain interruptions and revolts, for about a century and a half. Despair, not fruition, is the lot of the Petrarchian lover: "Fair is my love and cruel as she's fair" is his burden. It is a mistake, however, to see Petrarch in every phrase uttered by the despairing lover. Petrarch developed the mediæval *amour courtois*, which had been expressed in English verse on and off for two centuries before Wyatt wrote and of which Chaucer could supply him with examples:

> Your yen two wol slee me sodenly,
> I may the beaute of hem not sustene.

Whatever the novelty and importance of Petrarch's sonnets, the Petrarchian themes, so eagerly seized on in the sixteenth century, soon became stale; and Wyatt's making use of them has no bearing on his worth as a poet. Nevertheless there is one important implication in his Petrarchising: to Petrarchise was the fashion of the

cultured, and by adopting the fashion Wyatt implied that he was acquainted with the humanistic ideas of the Renaissance.

Other Italian models were Serafino, Alamanni and Pietro Aretino. From Serafino he derived a second impulse to write conceitedly and the *ottava rima*, his second metrical importation, used in the epigrams. From Alamanni he derived the *terza rima* and used it in his Satires; from Aretino's prose Penitential Psalms he derived his own version of the Psalms.[17]

Wyatt undoubtedly knew the poems of his French contemporaries, Marot and Mellin de Saint-Gelais, as he adapted half a dozen of their poems. He wrote rondeaus, a French form, and he may have been encouraged by his French contemporaries to try to trifle gracefully and to use a refrain frequently and now and again an elaborate stanza form.

There is little classical influence. The only classical poet to whom Wyatt owed anything appreciable was Horace. He is indebted to Horace in his Second and Third Satires, and in one or two of his lyrics he seems to have had odes of Horace in his mind. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch compares Wyatt's "They flee from me" (13) with "Vixi puellis nuper idoneus" and puts it at the head of English imitations of Horace.[18] In "My lute awake!" (33) one is reminded of *Odes*, I, 25. Another poem where the debt to Horace may be detected is that strange but beau-

tiful lyric beginning "What rage is this?" (50). The sentiment is Petrarchian, but I cannot help thinking that Wyatt is here searching for an English metrical equivalent of Horace's sapphics:

> What rage is this? What furour of what kind?
> What power, what plague doth weary thus my mind?
> Within my bones to rankle is assigned
> What poison, pleasant sweet?

Wyatt's manuscript corrections confirm what should be obvious, namely that this poem was very carefully executed. In every verse the last syllable of the fourth, unrhymed, line is made phonetically as different as possible from the rhyme-word of the three preceding lines, with the result that it creates an arresting contrast. Wyatt was, I believe, attempting to create a contrast similar to that existing between the fourth and the first three lines of a Sapphic stanza.

## III. WYATT'S POEMS

IN neither the rondeau, the sonnet, nor the eight-lined epigram was Wyatt really at home: he wrote in these forms as a schoolboy hammers out elegiacs or alcaics. The rondeau, a difficult form, requires an exquisite and artful ease; the English sonnet must be monumental ("A sonnet is a moment's monument", says Rossetti); and the epigram must be both polished and pointed. Wyatt's rondeaus are anything but exquisite and easy: the intolerable metrical jolt that he had inherited from Barclay and Pynson's Chaucer makes them grotesque and uncouth. There is something really ludicrous in hearing Petrarch's genteel conceits "run like a brewer's cart upon the stones, hobbling". Speaking of his heart Wyatt opens a rondeau thus:

> Help me to seek, for I lost it there;
> And if that ye have found it, ye that be here,
> And seek to convey it secretly,
> Handle it soft and tenderly;
> Or else it will plain and then appear.
> But rather restore it mannerly,
> Since that I do ask it thus honestly,
> For to lose it it sitteth me too near.
> Help me to seek.

The poem should have been a finished trifle, but a pupil in the art of walking a tight-rope, fearing every moment that he will fall, cannot be expected to achieve the easy smile of the adept. Only once in the rondeaus does Wyatt leave off

writing English verses and create poetry, namely in the last lines of "What no, perdie!" (20). Addressing his false love he says:

> Though that with pain I do procure
> For to forget that once was pure,
> Within my heart shall still that thing,
> Unstable unsure and wavering,
> Be in my mind without recure?
> What no, perdie!

Like the rondeaus, the sonnets are experimental, but they extend over a longer period of time and ultimately approach nearer perfection. Wyatt did, in fact, write one or two tolerable sonnets. Technically, he almost invented the Shakespearean form. His "Such is the course" consists of three quatrains and a couplet, agreeing with the Shakespearean form except for there being allowed but two rhyme-sounds in the first twelve lines. All Surrey did more was to write some of his sonnets with the full Shakespearean liberty of rhyme. The credit of evolving the Shakespearean form is thus almost entirely due to Wyatt. Of the thirty-one sonnets, twenty may be criticised in the same way as the rondeaus. They are early works, laboriously experimental, often very rough, interspersed with an occasional line of poetry. Wyatt seems, and very tactfully, to have chosen the most conceited sonnets of Petrarch to imitate. Here is an example of what Wyatt at his worst can make of a Petrarchian conceit. He is addressing Love, the god, and writes:

What webs he hath wrought well he perceiveth;
Whereby with himself on love he plaineth,
That spurreth with fire and bridilleth with ice.
Thus is it in such extremity brought,
In frozen though now, and now it standeth in flame.[19]

The best, as well as the best known, of the immature sonnets is "My galley charged with forgetfulness" (5), which, though crude in part, contains some poetry and in particular the line

The stars be hid that led me to this pain.

Occasionally too we get lines that might come from the early sonnets of Shakespeare, for instance:

But armed sighs my way do stop anon
Twixt hope and dread lacking my liberty,[20]

or

And yours the loss and mine the deadly pain.[21]

How laborious was the progress from metrical disorder to order may be seen from the curious sonnet, "I abide and abide" (18), in which Wyatt indulges with obvious glee in the old, bad, Skeltonic rattle.

I abide and abide and tarry the tide,
And with abiding speed well ye may!
Thus do I abide I wot alway
Nother obtaining nor yet denied.

It shows us Wyatt playing truant from the hard school in which he had set himself to learn, and is a far better poem than any of the early sonnets, for it has life and they have not. And then,

perhaps after an interval of years, Wyatt surprises us by showing that he has learnt his lesson, that he can write a sonnet in a recognisable rhythm and intelligently constructed. Once having learnt his lesson, he appears to write few more sonnets, and those few, though never without merit, show little sign of being his natural expression. A sonnet to please must be either exquisite or grand. Wyatt could at times be exquisite in the lyric measures of which he was a master, but the effort of writing sonnets was always too great to allow exquisiteness. Of grandeur he was never a master: he can be powerful or poignant, but not grand. The sonnet was not his proper medium.

The epigrams are poems of eight, very rarely of seven, lines, those of eight being in *ottava rima*. Most of them are trifles addressed to some lady. Wyatt writes, for instance, that his cruel mistress imagining her embroidery to be his heart, takes delight in stabbing it with her needle. Seeking pardon for having stolen a kiss, he reminds her that her revenge is easy: she has but to kiss him again to hale his heart clean from his breast and kill him. Wyatt is supposed to have composed epigrams of this sort during the years he was at court, and to have made something of a reputation by writing them. If this be true, we can only conclude that for lack of better the court of Henry VIII was easily pleased. The courtly epigrams are not in general as rough in rhythm as the early sonnets, but they lack the

necessary elegance. Wyatt makes a poor show when he competes with Austin Dobson. Again we get isolated patches of felicity. In the epigram

> From these high hills as when a spring doth fall,
> It trilleth down with still and subtle course, (47)

the second line has a surprising and seemingly unpremeditated beauty about it. This poetical surprise, which often appears in the songs, is one of the chief delights in Wyatt's poetry.

But not all the epigrams are courtly trifles. Nothing is plainer than that Wyatt had a serious disposition and that the mood to trifle was but fitful. Several of the epigrams are thoughtful, sometimes moral, in tone and translate his own experiences and feelings into earnest verse. "Tagus, farewell" (48) is an eloquent expression of his eagerness to see home; "Within my breast" (54) is a sincere and sober statement of his love of truth and hatred of crooked ways; "Lux, my fair falcon" (53) is a bitter complaint of the faithlessness of his friends, presumably before his last imprisonment, and contains the fine ending

> But ye my birds, I swear by all your bells,
> Ye be my friends and so be but few else;

"Sighs are my food" (52) is a passionate cry of pain from his prison. The last is also an excellent example of expressive and intentional irregu-

larity of metre. We could ill spare these personal epigrams.

Not all Wyatt's songs are good. Some of those written in the heavier measures are uncouth; some are dull and flat. But in most, at least a spark of fire is evident, and the positively good are sufficient in number to be treated as representative of what Wyatt was really fit for, not as mere exceptions. What follows is meant to apply to the better songs alone.

"The deeper accents of emotion, with much else that is of the soul of literature," says Sir E. K. Chambers, "come back with Wyatt."[22] These words state an essential truth about Wyatt: there are few of his better poems that do not convince us that we are listening to the words of an eager passionate man. Even when he is trivial he is emphatic; his triviality is that of a serious man who thinks it worth while to trifle well, not of one whose levity is constitutional. Take, for instance, the first two lines of the first poem of this anthology, one of the less serious poems picturing the lover who has doubt of the good faith of his mistress:

> It may be good, like it who list,
> But I do doubt; who can me blame?

This is not great or very serious art, but there is matter in it and as much seriousness as is in place. The poet might so easily have surrendered himself to making his theme the excuse for a pretty

tune; but he means what he says, he has grappled with his subject, has made his subject the real theme of, not the excuse for, his rhythm. The broken movement of the lines, the natural emphasis on the words *may* and *doubt*, carry conviction. The doubting lover has for the moment lived in the poet's imagination. Or take a more exquisite and more trivial poem:

With serving still
  This have I won,
For my goodwill
  To be undone.

And for redress
  Of all my pain,
Disdainfulness
  I have again;

And for reward
  Of all my smart,
Lo, thus unheard
  I must depart!

Therefore all ye
  That after shall
By fortune be,
  As I am, thrall,

Example take
  What I have won,
Thus for her sake
  To be undone! (40)

The subject of this is not serious: the imagined lover is not dangerously in love; there is no hint of a "wonder and a wild desire". Yet how vividly the poet has imagined the situation! The

lover, snubbed and left alone by his saucy mistress, soliloquises indignantly. The emphasis on THIS *have I won*, on *disdainfulness* occupying the whole of a line, on THUS *for her sake*, makes us feel that a real lover is speaking just after the girl has bounced out of the room. The essence of the poem is drama not a Petrarchian convention.

But Wyatt can be more serious without losing his power of being vivid and dramatic. In "Madame, withouten many words" (8), the lover's plea, though short, is earnest and eloquent. More moving but still dramatic are the love-litany of "Forget not yet" (12) and the delicately passionate pleading of "And wilt thou leave me thus?" (9). Equally strong passion is found in his songs of farewell to a faithless mistress, "Spite hath no power" (32), "My lute awake!" (33), "Blame not my lute" (34) and "In eternum" (38).

> Farewell, unknown, for though thou break
> My strings in spite with great disdain,
> Yet I have found out for thy sake
> Strings for to string my lute again.
> And if perchance this silly rhyme
> Do make thee blush at any time,
> Blame not my lute.

And again (from "My lute awake!"):

> Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain
> That makest but game on earnest pain;
> Think not alone under the sun
> Unquit to cause thy lovers plain,
> Although my lute and I have done.

Perchance thee lie withered and old
The winter nights that are so cold,
Plaining in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told;
Care then who list, for I have done.

In these two verses Wyatt rises to a height of passion that he never quite reaches again.

In illustrating the "deeper accents of emotion" I have called attention to the touch of drama, not only because of its intrinsic importance, but because it marks Wyatt off from most writers of love lyrics and especially from those of the Middle Ages. Critics are wrong when they state that Wyatt introduced the personal note into the English lyric,[23] for it is plainly present in the mediæval lyric also.

Foweles in the frith,
And fisses in the flod.
And I mon waxe wod;
Mulch sorwe I walke with
For best of bon and blood:[24]

this cannot be called impersonal, nor can

Icham for wowing al forwake,
Wery so water in wore;
Lest eny reve me my make
Ichabbe y-yerned yore:[25]

nor

She hath left me here alone,
All alone, as unknown,
Who sometime did me lead with herself,
And me loved as her own.[26]

It is not the personal but the dramatic element

that marks the passages I have quoted from Wyatt off from these. Somehow the receptive faculties of Wyatt's consciousness are more numerous and more varied: he is alive to more diverse impressions and more impressions simultaneously. The poem from which the last quotation was taken, "As ye came from the holy land of Walsingham", has a certain kind of beauty, an unearthliness, that it would be difficult to parallel; it is a poem that could very ill be spared: but it is confined; the spirit, if prisoned long in the atmosphere of that poem, would languish. There is absent the lively contact of mind with mind. But in the best poems of Wyatt there is freedom, movement, life.

Other writers of lyric, too, will offer the same contrast with Wyatt. Take Surrey, for instance. In his best lyric, "When raging love", the construction, the masterly way in which the comparison is worked out, excite our admiration; but there is no more drama, no more sense of the here and now, than in most of the lyrics of Matthew Arnold. And the vivid picture in "O happy dames" of the lonely wife, who tells how

> I stand the bitter night
> In my window where I may see
> Before the winds how the clouds flee

is but the exception that proves the rule. Nor did the Elizabethans in general make their lyrics any more dramatic than Surrey did his. Excep-

tions spring to the mind at once, but they *are* exceptions. In general, the untrue love to whom adieu is bidden, the nymph whom the swain bids live with him and be his love, the lady in whose face there was a garden of roses and lilies, Laura with the rosy cheeks, and the rest of the company, are shadowy creatures addressed by equally shadowy lovers. All is beautiful, but remotely or vaguely circumstantiated. It was Donne who carried on the movement that Wyatt had begun, and let the Elizabethan drama he loved into the Elizabethan lyric he despised. I would not for a moment suggest a close comparison between Wyatt and Donne. The dramatic element appears in only a part of Wyatt's lyrics and it is rarely allowed to encroach on their fitness as songs: reality, the urgency of the present hour, possess most of Donne's love lyrics, none of which are suitable to sing. It would be better to say that Wyatt is often nearer to Donne than to Campion or Fletcher. Where Wyatt and Donne most resemble each other is in their power of emphasising crucial words.

> Make me a mandrake, so I may groane [27] here,
> Or a stone fountaine weeping out my yeare

says Donne in *Twicknam Garden*, with powerful emphasis on *groane* and *weeping*.

> But all is turned thorough my gentleness
> Into a strange fashion of forsaking

says Wyatt in "They flee from me" (13), and succeeds in getting the stress on *strange* well enough.

But though the touch of drama may mark Wyatt off so clearly from his predecessors and contemporaries, it is not found everywhere in his best songs. More frequently it is the melody and the free and varied lyrical movement that holds us. In this Wyatt is the first of the Elizabethans. If any one of the songs illustrates the gift of melody best it is "What should I say?" (37).

What should I say?
  Since faith is dead,
And truth away
  From you is fled,
  Should I be led
    With doubleness?
    Nay, nay, mistress!

In the extracts quoted before, melody was there, but not so dominantly as in these lines, which look forward to such a masterpiece as "Fain would I change that note". Another song of great melodic beauty is "All heavy minds" (42): these lines, for instance—

Where is my thought?
  Where wanders my desire?
Where may the thing be sought
  That I require?

Light in the wind
  Doth flee all my delight;
Where truth and faithful mind
  Are put to flight.

Who shall me give
Feathered wings for to flee,
The thing that doth me grieve
That I may see?

Here again it is the music we heed. There is indeed emotion present; but it is the poet's exultation in the rhythms he creates, or some nameless feeling expressible only by music, not the emotion that arises from the immediate intense preoccupation with an action. It is worth while to give more examples and from little-known songs, for Wyatt's power over the music of words has not been praised enough. Here is a beautiful beginning (suggesting a minor key), to the level of which the rest of the poem does not keep up:

Now all of change
Must be my song,
And from my bond now must I break,
Since she so strange
Unto my wrong
Doth stop her ears to hear me speak.

Yet none doth know
As well as she
My grief which can have no restraint;
That fain would follow
Now needs must flee
For fault of ear unto my plaint.

Another beautiful beginning, whose quality is this time sustained to the end, is:

What death is worse than this,
When my delight,

My weal, my joy, my bliss,
Is from my sight?
Both day and night
My life, alas, I miss.(30)

Often in generally mediocre lyrics passages of melodic beauty will occur, for instance:

But fancy is so frail
And flitting still so fast,
That faith may not prevail
To help me first nor last.

For fancy at his lust
Doth rule all but by guess;
Whereto should I then trust
In truth or stedfastness? [28]

and

It lasteth not that stands by change:
Fancy doth change; fortune is frail.[29]

The above passages are all well fitted to be set to music: others suggest that Wyatt had music in his mind when he wrote, as do so many of Campion's songs. The swiftness of

Your looks so often cast,
Your eyes so friendly rolled,
Your sight fixed so fast,
Always one to behold (3)

is peculiarly suggestive of a tune, as is

My hope, alas, hath me abused,
And vain rejoicing hath me fed;
Lust and joy have me refused, (29)

where one can imagine the musical stress on *lust*. And the varied cadence of "If in the world" (44)

suggests very plainly a shifting cadence of the music.

The quotations given illustrate sufficiently the variety of metre [30] in which Wyatt wrote, and, more important, the variety of movement. If there is monotony in Wyatt's worst, there is variety in his best. Wyatt's songs vary between speed and slowness, between a staccato and a sustained rhythm, in a way that proves a high mastery of his medium. You cannot say that "With serving still" (40) and "In eternum" (38) are rhythmical tautology, or that the rattle of

> Perdie, I said it not,
> Nor never thought to do:
> As well as I ye wot
> I have no power thereto (4)

remotely resembles the swell and fall of

> If with complaint the pain might be expresst
> That inwardly doth cause me sigh and groan,
> Your hard heart and your cruel breast
> Should sigh and plain for my unrest;
> And though it were of stone
> Yet should remorse cause it relent and moan. (35)

The notion that Wyatt was a mere experimenter is by such lines as the last reduced to absurdity.

In several of the extracts quoted a peculiar quality of Wyatt's verse was evident: an extreme simplicity of language and an almost conversational cadence. Wordsworth might well have quoted some of Wyatt to illustrate his theory of poetic diction. And just as Pope can simply

talk and at the same time produce impeccable couplets, so Wyatt will write words, simple and the least removed in their order from prose, which are charged with a delicate lyric fragrance.

> Can ye say nay
> But you said
> That I alway
> Should be obeyed? (37)

or

> Alas, my dear,
> Have I deserved so,
> That no help may appear
> Of all my woe? (42)

or

> She wept and wrung her hands withal;
> The tears fell in my neck;
> She turned her face and let it fall;
> Scarcely therewith could speak.
> Alas the while! (14)

No one till Suckling can converse so easily in a lyric.

What gives a special vitality to some of Wyatt's poems is a certain unexpectedness. The very monotony of much of what he wrote gives anything out of the ordinary a peculiar force, enhancing the surprise of passages or poems already surprising in themselves. For instance, the lines quoted from "My lute awake!" about his mistress, grown old, complaining to the moon on the cold winter nights (borrowed though the sentiment may be) startle like some rare flower

among the ordinary daisies and buttercups of a meadow. We cannot help being struck, amid the conventional lamentations of the lover, by the simple realism of

> The clothes that on the bed do lie
> Always methink they lie awry,[31]

or by the surprising novelty of rhythm in

> Process of time worketh such wonder
> That water, which is of kind so soft,
> Doth pierce the marble stone asunder
> By little drops falling from aloft.
>
> And yet an heart that seems so tender
> Receiveth no drop of the stilling tears,
> That alway still cause me to render
> The vain plaint that sounds not in her ears.[32]

*Gutta cavat lapidem;* the sentiment is not startlingly original: but the rhythm—what a strange mixture of *The Vision of Piers the Plowman* and *Irish Melodies*! Of all Wyatt's poems the most surprising, as different from one another as from the rest of what he wrote, are "They flee from me" (13), "In eternum" (38) and "What rage is this?" (50). All three give one the feeling of having had their birth spontaneously in some unexplored region of Wyatt's brain. Even if sources were discovered (which they have not been), it is unlikely that they would do anything to explain the strangeness of these poems, which are simply another illustration of the habit poets have of writing the unexpected: *The Phœnix and*

*the Turtle*, *Sir Eustace Grey*, *In the Garden at Swainston*.

Even a slight touch of feeling, of drama, of realism or of the strange in Wyatt's poems stirs us in a peculiar and even disproportionate way; and for the same reason that any kind of immature art has a peculiar power. Any art which is in the stage of working out a technique is apt to leave the emotions to take care of themselves, with the result that when feeling does creep in, it is expressed with a purity and an absence of self-consciousness impossible of attainment in more sophisticated ages. The idea that art is primarily concerned with expressing feeling is comparatively new. Longinus knew it, some critics of the eighteenth century voiced it, but it was not generally accepted in England till after Wordsworth's preface to *The Lyrical Ballads*. Be the idea true or not, for the sake of artistic creation it had better never have been stressed; for the simple reason that when artists think that art should primarily express feeling they are inclined to force their own feelings unnaturally. The makers of the Delphic Charioteer or of the Ludovisi Throne would have been puzzled at the idea that they were expressing their feelings; they thought they were making copies of nature: but deep feeling they did express and in a singularly pure and unsentimental way. Similarly Malory is first concerned with his story and his picture of chivalry; with the result that the touches of feeling

have an effect quite out of proportion to the feeling's apparent intensity.

And so it is with Wyatt. His professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilise it, to raise its powers to those of its neighbours; but in experimenting he could not help expressing now and again his own feelings. And this expression by its very unpremeditatedness is more precious than its bulk or depth would appear to warrant.

Wyatt's Satires have been overpraised as literature because of their subject-matter. If we are interested in Wyatt we cannot but enjoy the account he gives of his own life at home while he was banished from court; but we need not therefore be persuaded that poetically the account can compare with his best songs. The truth is that all three Satires are experimental, written in a metre of which he was not master and through which one feels he was struggling towards something—he does not quite know what. They have many good points and contain poetical and interesting passages, but as a whole they fail.

The Satires were probably written about the year 1536, after Wyatt had been dismissed from the court and placed for a spell under the supervision of his father at Allington Castle. Like a sensible man, he made the best of his exile, praised the country and railed at the court, till he was once more summoned to serve the King. There

is no reason to doubt either the sincerity of what he said or his pleasure in getting back to the life he had just abused.

> Haec ubi locutus faenerator Alfius,
> iam iam futurus rusticus,
> Omnem redegit Idibus pecuniam,
> quaerit Kalendis ponere.

In the history of English literature Wyatt's Satires are important as the first example of *terza rima* in the language. He derived the metre from Alamanni, whose Tenth Satire he more or less translated into his own First Satire. I cannot agree with Wyatt's editor [33] that he uses the metre with any success. The essence of the metre is that the tercets should be kept mainly intact. An occasional run-on from one tercet to another may give a pleasing variety, but constantly to run on destroys the metre's character, tending to split it up into quatrains and isolated lines or groups. Wyatt constantly breaks the tercet, thus turning a strong, hard and severe measure into something incoherent and smudgy.[34] When he is translating Alamanni at the beginning of the First Satire he sticks fairly closely to his metrical model, but even during this fairly close adherence he writes in a way that violates the metre's function.

> But true it is that I have always meant
> Less to esteem them than the common sort,
> Of outward things that judge in their intent

Without regard what doth inward resort.
I grant some time that of glory the fire
Doth touch my heart; me list not to report

Blame by honour and honour to desire.[35]

Wyatt breaks up three tercets in these lines, which translate two unbroken tercets of the Italian original. After some forty lines of the First and in the other two Satires, Wyatt runs on very frequently and in fact seems to be trying to turn *terza rima* into a free, flowing measure. He is trying to do what Spenser in *Colin Clout* did with more success to the decasyllabic quatrain. But neither metre was destined to compete with the couplet as a metre with flow suppleness and impetus. It is, however, remarkable what impetus Wyatt *can* give to the metre for a few lines when he is really moved.

Alas! my Poynz, how men do seek the best
And find the worst, by error as they stray!
And no marvail, when sight is so opprest

And blind the guide. Anon out of way
Goeth guide and all in seeking quiet life.
O wretched minds! there is no gold that may

Grant that ye seek, no war, no peace, no strife.
No, no, although thy head were hoopt with gold,
Sergeant with mace, hawbert, sword, nor knife

Cannot repulse the care that follow should. (59)

The quality of this passage depends entirely on the rhythm and not at all on the rhymes (or at least not on the arrangement of the rhymes in the scheme of the *terza rima*). Ignore the rhymes

and you get a piece of blank verse unequalled till the rise of Elizabethan drama. Such athletic movement was only reached again from the side of monotonous regularity: Wyatt worked differently, stirring his uncouthness to life by sheer force of feeling.

But there are few passages in the Satires so good. In general the movement is halting, not free; we feel like saying not *sufflaminandus erat* but the opposite, take the brakes off. The desire for movement is there, but it is rarely fulfilled. Wyatt has, however, advanced on the early sonnets. Certain licences, later abandoned, he does indeed allow himself. The second line of the First Satire, for instance, has only nine syllables:

The cause why that homeward I me draw.

Such lines are frequent, but usually they can be fitted into the measure easily and were doubtless written deliberately and not through mere bungling. The line just quoted, with *cause* strongly, and *why* fairly strongly, accented, runs tolerably. Sometimes even, a line, apparently rough, will yield an expressive emphasis.

I cannot speak and look like a saint [36]

is not promising at first reading, but read it

I/ cannót/ speák/ and loók/ like a saínt/

and you feel the man means what he says. Now out of the early sonnets no amount of juggling

will get harmony or an expressive emphasis; but in the Satires Wyatt seems usually to know what he is at and to have reached a marked stage beyond Hawes and Barclay.

Finally, it would be unfair to leave the Satires without mentioning the air of unaffected self-expression that for all their faults lends them a certain charm. It is impossible not to enjoy Wyatt's account of himself "stalking" with his bow in frosty weather or sitting at his book when the weather is foul, telling us that he picked up the fable of the town mouse and the country mouse from his "mother's maids when they did sew or spin", or thanking God he is in "Kent and Christendom" with the heartiness of a "Georgian" poet thanking God he is in the finest land in the world, the County of Sussex.

Miss Foxwell writes [37] that "the Psalms deserve more recognition. The Satires have been justly praised, but they are fine translations from a worthy model. The Psalms show more originality . . . they claim a higher, or at least as high a place, as the Satires." And again: "All the best qualities in Wiat are found in the Psalms: a wealth of language, vigorous and clear thought, rising to fine moral expression. . . . He touches at times the mystical vision which to Blake was the only domain of poetry and the only reality of life." [38] With the best will to see good in Wyatt's verse, I can only disagree entirely. It is quite possible that the *Psalms* are an effusion of

real piety. They were written after Wyatt's return from Spain, whence he sent his two letters of moral exhortation to his son. It seems likely that he frequently turned his thoughts to God in the last years of his life and perhaps felt penitent for his not altogether exemplary youth. But piety does not necessarily cause poetry, and judged as poetry Wyatt's *Psalms* are academic exercises, penitential not merely in matter, but to those whose task it is to read them. The prologues are in heavy *ottava rima*, the actual psalms in *terza rima*, showing no improvement on that of the Satires. There is an occasional flicker of inspiration, as in the opening of the first prologue:

> Love to give law unto his subject hearts
> Stood in the eyes of Barsabe the bright;

but the general effect is dull and heavy. It cannot be said that Wyatt's last work shows any signs of a brilliant development cut off by early death.

The remarks in this section are intended to introduce the best of Wyatt's poems, not to perform the more ambitious task of giving an account of his character. To do that one would have to take into account all that remains of his prose and what we know of him from his contemporaries. But I would have it remembered that the best of Wyatt's lyrics are glimpses into a character remarkable for depth and richness. The very fact that they are but glimpses helps to

explain their power: there is so much behind them. Through them we are privileged to get an inkling of a nature whom, if he were living now, we should be eager and proud to know. We can never know him as his contemporaries did, and Surrey's epitaph on him, "Wyatt resteth here", which commemorates him as a man rather than as a poet, can hardly fail to remain of criticism the most illuminating.

## IV. TEXT, EDITORS AND CRITICS

FOR a full description of the manuscripts the reader is referred to Foxwell, *Study*, chapters 1 to 4 and appendix A. Let it be said here that the text of Wyatt's verse is based mainly on three manuscripts, the printed version of the Penitential Psalms (1549), and Tottell's Miscellany (1557). The most important manuscript is that commonly referred to as the E MS. (British Museum Egerton 2711). It was Wyatt's own manuscript, in part written in his hand and containing many of his own corrections. It is probable that the poems were entered in chronological order. The D MS. (British Museum Additional 17492), containing poems of other authors besides Wyatt, is chiefly valuable in that it contains sixty-three poems not present in any other manuscript or in Tottell's Miscellany. It is the sole source of several of the best songs, such as "And wilt thou leave me thus?", "Forget not yet", and "What should I say?" It belonged to friends of Wyatt at the English court; and it agrees generally, in the poems common to it and the E MS., with the original readings of the E MS. before Wyatt's own corrections. The D MS., therefore, would contain the early version of Wyatt's poems. The A MS. (British Museum Additional 28635) is of less importance. It contains few unique poems or passages: in part it follows the E MS. closely, and in part it alters

the E MS. in much the same way as Tottell's editor altered the text of Wyatt for his Miscellany. Wyatt's version of the Psalms was printed in 1549, but the one extant copy was lost in a fire early in the nineteenth century. The *Songes and Sonettes*, printed by Richard Tottell in 1557 and commonly known as Tottell's Miscellany, contain the first printed version of ninety-five of Wyatt's poems, a few of which are not found in any of the manuscripts. Who edited them, whether Tottell the printer, or, as Arber conjectures, the poet Grimald, is unknown; but whoever did, he produced versions that differ importantly from Wyatt's own versions in the E and D MSS. Tottell's versions are smoother, more regular and duller, the product of some "improver" during the fifteen years between Wyatt's death and the publication of the Miscellany. For the best text of Wyatt's poems we go, whenever possible, to the E and D MSS.

Tottell's editor did Wyatt a service in printing and making known a number of his poems, but a disservice in omitting many of the best. Wyatt's manuscripts were forgotten and the Miscellany remained the sole source of his poems for two centuries and a half. In 1816 G. F. Nott published his great edition of Wyatt based on the E and D MSS. The edition contains a biography, an appreciation, the text of Wyatt's prose as well as of his verse, and careful notes in which a number of Wyatt's poems or lines are

traced to Italian, French or classical sources. The text is good on the whole, but not always trustworthy, and there was room for the text published in 1913 by Miss A. K. Foxwell, which, apart from punctuation, faithfully reproduces the text from the best available sources.

Wyatt's critics seem to have gone wrong from the beginning, and they probably had the excuse that he himself misjudged his own poetry. As I pointed out above (p. 22) motives of patriotism upset a purely literary judgment, and those works were most highly esteemed that competed most obviously with what was being written abroad. Surrey and Leland single out one of the Psalms for special praise. Tottell, in his preface to the reader, is more just: he speaks of "the weightinesse of the depewitted sir Thomas Wyat the elders verse". He can hardly have been referring to the Psalms, which are not included in the Miscellany, and seems to have perceived that the lyrics were not merely trivial. After Wyatt and Surrey had occupied the bulk of one anthology, which was further the chief printed source of their works, it was inevitable that their names should be mentioned together; but it was the author of the *Arte of English Poesy*[39] who encouraged the tendency to confuse their identities, for he says that he finds very little difference between them, and applies the same terms of praise to the verse of both. Other references to Wyatt in the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages are

short and devoid of criticism: he is mentioned with approval as one of the pioneers, but as a poet he is held in little esteem. During most of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries he can hardly have been read at all. Phillips, Milton's nephew, remarks that Surrey's poetry was antiquated and totally forgotten, and the remark would apply with even greater force (if that were possible) to Wyatt. Pope mentions Surrey in *Windsor Forest*, but not Wyatt. In 1717 Tottell's Miscellany was reprinted, but the general opinion of the few eighteenth-century readers of Wyatt was probably voiced in Theophilus Cibber's *Lives of the Poets* (1753): "In his poetical capacity he does not appear to have much imagination, neither are his verses so musical and so well polished as lord Surry's". The first serious criticism of Wyatt is contained in Warton's *History of English Poetry*, section 38. But Warton is unjust and unsympathetic. He treats him as a kind of inferior Surrey (not even realising that Surrey was the younger and Wyatt's pupil), and is more impressed by the affectation of his Petrarchian sentiments than by the power of his lyrics. (We must remember that Warton called Milton's Nativity Ode, except for a few verses, "a string of affected conceits, which his early youth, and the fashion of the times, can only excuse".) Still, he singles out "My lute awake!" for praise. Warton prefers the Satires to the rest of the verse, and sums up his opinion in these words: "The

truth is, his genius was of the moral and didactic species: and his poems abound more in good sense, satire and observations on life, than in pathos and imagination." In justice to Warton it should be remembered that many of Wyatt's best lyrics, being absent from Tottell's Miscellany, were unknown to him.

Nott gets nearer the truth than Warton. The superiority of Surrey (whom he edited too) over Wyatt, assumed for over two centuries, he still takes for granted; but in one passage he shows that in his heart he knew better. Writing of some of the lyrics he says: "In these and many similar passages that might be adduced we observe a certain earnestness of expression, and a dignified simplicity of thought, which distinguishes Wyatt's amatory effusions from Surrey's, and I might add from those of every other writer in our language." [40] But he does not go so far as to say that Wyatt is profounder than Surrey, and he prefers the Satires to the lyrics.

Nott's views were hardly questioned during the nineteenth century till Courthope in the second volume of his *History of English Poetry* (1897) made a study of Wyatt in every way superior to anything that had been written before. Courthope perceived that Wyatt's verse differed sharply from Surrey's; that it was original and individual and that it was strong and passionate. F. M. Padelford, in the introduction to his *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics*, speaks justly of Wyatt.

Miss Foxwell in her *Study* and her edition is more successful in her textual studies than in her criticism. By exaggerating the merit of the Psalms, she tries to exalt Wyatt into a great poet. The frequent comparisons with Browning and such sentences as: "*Wiat's life and work* is a song of harmony. The 'music of the spheres' is here. It is a vindication of what man can become with lofty aim and set purpose" do not inspire the reader with much trust. Finally J. M. Berdan's *Early Tudor Poetry* (1920),[41] a learned and in many ways a valuable book, must be mentioned to show that Courthope's appreciation has not been accepted by all. Berdan admits the good quality of some ten or twelve lyrics, but, these excluded, Wyatt is a mere experimenter, useful as a pioneer but of no interest as a poet. He is a writer whose primary concern is with form rather than with content: he suffers from a lack of emotion. To such judgments one can only reply with a denial and an appeal to the poems themselves.

About the general critical opinion in the last few years it is not easy to speak. A few critics have shown that they value Wyatt rightly, but it would seem that many readers have made the mistake of over-emphasising the sonnets, of confining their reading to Tottell's Miscellany, of under-estimating the number of good lyrics, and of failing to see that Wyatt by virtue of his profounder and more passionate temperament is a greater poet than Surrey.

# SELECTION FROM WYATT'S POEMS

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### I

It may be good, like it who list,
  But I do doubt; who can me blame?
For oft assured, yet have I missed;
  And now again I fear the same.
  The windy words, the eyes' quaint game,
    Of sudden change maketh me aghast.
    For dread to fall I stand not fast.

Alas! I tread an endless maze,
  That seeketh to accord two contraries,
And hopes still and nothing hase,
  Imprisoned in liberties.
  As one unheard and still that cries,
    Always thirsty and yet nothing I taste.
    For dread to fall I stand not fast.

Assured, I doubt I be not sure;
  And should I trust to much surety,
That oft hath put the proof in ure,
  And never hath found it trusty?
  "Nay, Sir, in faith, it were great folly."
    And yet my life thus I do waste.
    For dread to fall I stand not fast.

## 2

Take heed betime, lest ye be spied;
Your loving eyes cannot hide;
At last the truth will sure be tried.
Therefore take heed!

For some there be of crafty kind;
Though you show no part of your mind,
Surely their eyes ye cannot blind.
Therefore take heed!

For in like case themselves hath been
And thought right sure none had them seen,
But it was not as they did ween.
Therefore take heed!

Although they be of divers schools
And well can use all crafty tools,
At length they prove themselves but fools.
Therefore take heed!

If they might take you in that trap,
They would soon leave it in your lap.
To love unspied is but a hap.
Therefore take heed!

## 3

Your looks so often cast,
  Your eyes so friendly rolled,
Your sight fixed so fast,
  Always one to behold;
  Though hide it fain ye would,
    It plainly doth declare
  Who hath your heart in hold,
    And where good will ye bear.

Fain would ye find a cloak
  Your brenning fire to hide,
Yet both the flame and smoke
  Breaks out on every side.
  Ye cannot love so guide
    That it no issue win:
  Abroad needs must it glide,
    That brens so hot within.

For cause yourself do wink,
  Ye judge all other blind;
And secret it you think
  Which every man doth find.
  In waste oft spend ye wind
    Yourself in love to quit;
  For agues of that kind
    Will show who hath the fit.

Your sighs you fet from far,
  And all to wry your woe;
Yet are ye ne'er the narre:
  Men are not blinded so.
  Deeply oft swear ye no;
    But all those oaths are vain:
  So well your eye doth show
    Who puts your heart to pain.

Think not therefore to hide
That still itself betrays,
Nor seek means to provide
To dark the sunny days.
Forget those wonted ways;
Leave off such frowning cheer:
There will be found no stays
To stop a thing so clear.

## 4

Perdie, I said it not,
  Nor ever thought to do:
As well as I ye wot
  I have no power thereto:
And if I did, the lot
  That first did me enchain
Do never slack the knot,
  But strait it to my pain.

And if I did, each thing
  That may do harm or woe
Continually may wring
  My heart whereso I go:
Report may always ring
  Of shame of me for aye,
If in my heart did spring
  The words that ye do say.

If I said so, each star
  That is in heaven above
May frown on me to mar
  The hope I have in love;
And if I did, such war
  As they brought out of Troy
Bring all my life afar
  From all this lust and joy.

And if I did so say,
  The beauty that me bound,
Encreast from day to day
  More cruel to my wound,
With all the moan that may
  To plaint may turn my song;
My life may soon decay
  Without redress, by wrong.

If I be clear fro thought
  Why do ye then complain?
Then is this thing but sought
  To turn me to more pain.
Then that that ye have wrought
  Ye must it now redress;
Of right therefore ye ought
  Such rigour to repress.

And as I have deserved,
  So grant me now my hire;
Ye know I never swerved,
  Ye never found me liar.
For Rachel have I served,
  (For Leah cared I never)
And her I have reserved
  Within my heart for ever.

## 5

My galley charged with forgetfulness
Thorough sharp seas in winter nights doth pass
'Tween rock and rock; and eke mine enemy, alas,
That is my lord, steereth with cruelness;
And every oar a thought in readiness
As though that death were light in such a case.
An endless wind doth tear the sail apace
Of forced sights and trusty fearfulness;
A rain of tears, a cloud of derk disdain,
Hath done the wearied cords great hinderance,
Wreathed with error and eke with ignorance.
The stars be hid that led me to this pain.
Drowned in reason that should me comfort;
And I remain despairing of the port.

## 6

My love is like unto th' eternal fire;
And I as those which therein do remain,
Whose grievous pain is but their great desire
To see the sight which they may not attain.
So in hell's heat myself I feel to be,
That am restrained by great extremity
The sight of her that is so dear to me.
O puissant love and power of great avail,
By whom hell may be felt or death assail!

## 7

A face that should content me wondrous well
Should not be fair but lovely to behold,
With gladsome cheer all grief for to expel;
With sober looks so would I that it should
Speak without words such words as none can tell;
Her tress also should be of crisped gold;
With wit: and thus might chance I might be tied,
And knit again the knot that should not slide.

## 8

Madame, withouten many words,
  Once, I am sure, ye will or no:
And if ye will, then leave your bourds
  And use your wit, and shew it so;

And with a beck ye shall me call.
  And if of one that burneth alway
Ye have any pity at all,
  Answer him fair with yea or nay.

If it be yea, I shall be fain;
  If it be nay, friends as before;
Ye shall another man obtain,
  And I mine own and yours no more.

## 9

And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay, for shame,
To save thee from the blame
Of all my grief and grame;
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
That hath given thee my heart
Never for to depart
Neither for pain or smart:
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

And wilt thou leave me thus,
And have no more pity
Of him that loveth thee?
Helas thy cruelty!
And wilt thou leave me thus?
Say nay, say nay!

## 10

Disdain me not without desert,
Nor leave me not so suddenly;
Since well ye wot that in my heart
I mean ye not but honestly.
Disdain me not.

Refuse me not without cause why,
Nor think me not to be unjust;
Since that by lot of fantasy
This careful knot needs knit I must.
Refuse me not.

Mistrust me not, though some there be
That fain would spot my steadfastness;
Believe them not, since that we see
The proof is not as they express.
Mistrust me not.

Forsake me not till I deserve,
Nor hate me not till I offend;
Destroy me not till that I swerve;
But since ye know what I intend,
Forsake me not.

Disdain me not that am your own:
Refuse me not that am so true:
Mistrust me not till all be known:
Forsake me not ne for no new.
Disdain me not.

## II

Is it possible
That so high debate,
So sharp, so sore, and of such rate,
Should end so soon that was begun so late,
Is it possible?

Is it possible?
So cruel intent,
So hasty heat and so soon spent,
From love to hate, and thence for to relent,
Is it possible?

Is it possible
That any may find
Within one heart so divers mind,
To change or turn as weather and wind,
Is it possible?

Is it possible
To spy it in an eye,
That turns as oft as chance on die,
The truth whereof can any try,
Is it possible?

It is possible
For to turn so oft,
To bring that lowest that was most aloft;
And to fall highest yet to light soft.
It is possible.

All is possible,
Whoso list believe;
Trust therefore first and after preve:
As men wed ladies by licence and leave,
All is possible.

## 12

Forget not yet the tried entent
Of such a truth as I have meant,
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet when first began
The weary life ye know, since whan
The suit, the service none tell can,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet the great assays,
The cruel wrong, the scornful ways,
The painful patience in denays,
Forget not yet.

Forget not yet, forget not this,
How long ago hath been, and is
The mind that never meant amiss,
Forget not yet.

Forget not then thine own approved,
The which so long hath thee so loved,
Whose steadfast faith yet never moved,
Forget not this.

## 13

They flee from me that sometime did me seek,
With naked foot stalking in my chamber.
I have seen them gentle, tame and meek,
That now are wild and do not remember
That sometime they put themselves in danger
To take bread at my hand; and now they range
Busily seeking with a continual change.

Thankt be fortune, it hath been otherwise
Twenty times better; but once, in special,
In thin array, after a pleasant guise,
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,
And she me caught in her arms long and small,
Therewith all sweetly did me kiss,
And softly said: "Dear heart, how like you this?"

It was no dream; I lay broad waking:
But all is turned thorough my gentleness
Into a strange fashion of forsaking;
And I have leave to go of her goodness;
And she also to use new-fangleness.
But since that I so kindely am served,
I fain would know what she hath deserved.

## 14

There was never nothing more me pained,
Nor nothing more me moved,
As when my sweetheart her complained
That ever she me loved.
Alas the while!

With piteous look she said (and sight):
"Alas, what aileth me,
To love and set my wealth so light
On him that loveth not me?
Alas the while!

"Was I not well void of all pain
When that nothing me grieved?
And now with sorrows I must complain,
And cannot be relieved.
Alas the while!

"My restful nights and joyful days,
Since I began to love,
Be take from me; all thing decays,
Yet can I not remove.
Alas the while!"

She wept and wrung her hands withal;
The tears fell in my neck;
She turned her face and let it fall;
Scarcely therewith could speak.
Alas the while!

Her pains tormented me so sore
That comfort had I none;
But cursed my fortune more and more
To see her sob and groan.
Alas the while!

## 15

Patience, though I have not
  The thing that I require:
I must of force, God wot,
  Forbear my most desire;
For no ways can I find
To sail against the wind.

Patience, do what they will
  To work me woe or spite:
I shall content me still
  To think both day and night;
To think and hold my peace,
Since there is no redress.

Patience withouten blame,
  For I offended nought;
I know they know the same,
  Though they have changed their thought.
Was ever thought so moved,
To hate that it hath loved?

Patience of all my harm,
  For fortune is my foe;
Patience must be the charm
  To heal me of my woe.
Patience without offence
Is a painful patience.

## 16

Since love will needs that I shall love,
  Of very force I must agree;
And since no chance may it remove,
  In wealth and in adversity
I shall alway myself apply
To serve, and suffer patiently.

Though for good will I find but hate,
  And cruelty my life to waste,
And though that still a wretched state
  Should pine my days unto the last:
Yet I profess it willingly
To serve, and suffer patiently.

For since my heart is bound to serve,
  And I not ruler of my own,
Whatso befall, till that I sterve,
  By proof full well it shall be known
That I shall still myself apply
To serve, and suffer patiently.

Yea though my grief find no redress
  But still increase before mine eyes:
Though my reward be cruelness,
  With all the harm hap can devise:
Yet I profess it willingly
To serve, and suffer patiently.

Yea though fortune her pleasant face
  Should show, to set me up aloft,
And straight my wealth for to deface
  Should writhe away, as she doth oft:
Yet would I still myself apply
To serve, and suffer patiently.

There is no grief, no smart, no woe,
  That yet I feel or after shall,
That from this mind may make me go:
  And whatsoever me befall,
I do profess it willingly
To serve, and suffer patiently.

## 17

Ye know my heart, my lady dear,
That since the time I was your thrall
I have been yours both whole and clear,
Though my reward hath been but small;
So I am yet and more than all.
And ye know well how I have served,
As if ye prove it shall appear,
How well, how long,
How faithfully,
And suffered wrong
How patiently!
Then since that I have never swerved,
Let not my pains be undeserved.

Ye know also though ye say nay
That you alone are my desire;
And you alone it is that may
Assuage my fervent flaming fire.
Succour me then, I you require.
Ye know it were a just request
(Since ye do cause the heat, I say)
If that I burn
That ye will warm,
And not to turn
All to my harm,
Lending such flame from frozen breast
Against all right for my unrest.

And I know well how frowardly
Ye have mistaken my true intent,
And hitherto how wrongfully
I have found cause for to repent.
But death shall rid me readily,
If your [hard] heart do not relent.

And I know well all this ye know,
That I and mine
And all I have,
You may assign
To spill or save.
Why are ye then so cruel foe
Unto your own that loveth you so?

## 18

I abide and abide and better abide
(And after the old proverb) the happy day;
And ever my lady to me doth say
"Let me alone and I will provide".
I abide and abide and tarry the tide,
And with abiding speed well ye may!
Thus do I abide I wot alway
Nother obtaining nor yet denied.
Aye me! this long abiding
Seemeth to me as who sayeth
A prolonging of a dying death
Or a refusing of a desired thing.
Much were it better for to be plain
Then to say "abide" and yet not obtain.

## 19

Divers doth use, as I have heard and know,
When that to change their ladies do begin,
To moan and wail and never for to lynn;
Hoping thereby to 'pease their painful woe.
And some there be that, when it chanceth so
That women change and hate where love hath been,
They call them false and think with words to win
The hearts of them which otherwhere doth grow.
But as for me, though that by chance indeed
Change hath outworn the favour that I had,
I will not wail, lament, nor yet be sad,
Nor call her false that falsely did me feed;
But let it pass and think it is of kind
That often change doth please a woman's mind.

## 20

What no, perdie, ye may be sure!
Think not to make me to your lure,
With words and cheer so contrarying,
Sweet and sour counterweighing;
Too much it were still to endure.
Truth is tried, where craft is in ure.
But though ye have had my heartes cure,
Trow ye I dote without ending?
What no, perdie!
Though that with pain I do procure
For to forget that once was pure,
Within my heart shall still that thing,
Unstable unsure and wavering,
Be in my mind without recure?
What no, perdie!

## 21

When first mine eyes did view and mark
  Thy fair beauty to behold;
And when mine ears listened to hark
  The pleasant words that thou me told:
    I would as then I had been free
    From ears to hear and eyes to see.

And when my lips first gan to move,
  Whereby my heart to thee was known;
And when my tongue did talk of love
  To thee that hast true love down thrown:
    I would my lips and tongue also
    Had then been dumb, no deal to go.

And when my hands have handled ought
  That thee hath kept in memory;
And when my feet have gone and sought
  To find and get thee company:
    I would each hand a foot had been,
    And I each foot a hand had seen.

And when in mind I did consent
  To follow this my fancy's will;
And when my heart did first relent
  To taste such bait my life to spill:
    I would my heart had been as thine,
    Or else thy heart had been as mine.

## 22

Tangled I was in love's snare,
Oppress with pain, torment with care,
Of grief right sure, of joy full bare,
  Clean in despair by cruelty;
  But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
  For I am now at liberty.

The woful day so full of pain,
The weary night all spent in vain,
The labour lost for so small gain,
  To write them all it will not be;
  But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
  For I am now at liberty.

Everything that fair doth show
When proof is made it proveth not so,
But turneth mirth to bitter woe,
  Which in this case full well I see;
  But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
  For I am now at liberty.

Too great desire was my guide,
And wanton will went by my side;
Hope ruled still and made me bide
  Of love's craft th' extremity.
  But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
  For I am now at liberty.

With feigned words that were but wind
To long delays I was assigned;
Her wily looks my wit did blind;
  Thus as she would I did agree.
  But ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
  For I am now at liberty.

Was never bird tangled in lime
That brake away in better time,
Than I that rotten boughs did climb
And had no hurt but scaped free.
Now ha, ha, ha, full well is me,
For I am now at liberty.

## 23

Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee
To set so light my liberty,
Making me bond when I was free?
Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee?

When thou were rid from all distress,
Void of all pain and pensiveness,
To choose again a new mistress
Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee?

When thou were well thou could not hold
To turn again, that were too bold.
Thus to renew thy sorrows old
Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee?

Thou know'st full well that but of late
I was turned out of loves gate.
And now to guide me to this mate
Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee?

I hopt full well all had been done,
But now my hope is ta'en and won.
To my torment to yield so soon
Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee?

## 24

At most mischief
I suffer grief;
For of relief
  Since I have none,
My lute and I
Continually
Shall us apply
  To sigh and moan.

Nought may prevail
To weep or wail;
Pity doth fail
  In you, alas!
Mourning or moan,
Complaint or none,
It is all one,
  As in this case.

For cruelty
That most can be
Hath sovereignty
  Within your heart;
Which maketh bare
All my welfare:
Nought do you care
  How sore I smart.

No tiger's heart
Is so pervert,
Without desert
  To wreak his ire;
And you me kill
For my goodwill:
Lo, how I spill
  For my desire!

There is no love
That can ye move,
And I can prove
  None other way;
Therefore I must
Restrain my lust,
Banish my trust
  And wealth away.

For in mischief
I suffer grief,
For of relief
  Since I have none,
My lute and I
Continually
Shall us apply
  To sigh and moan.

## 25

Marvel no more although
The songs I sing do moan,
For other life than woe
I never proved none.
And in my heart also
Is graven with letters deep
A thousand sighs and mo,
A flood of tears to weep.

How may a man in smart
Find matter to rejoice?
How may a mourning heart
Set forth a pleasant voice?
Play who that can that part:
Needs must in me appear
How fortune, overthwart,
Doth cause my mourning cheer.

Perdie, there is no man
If he never saw sight
That perfectly tell can
The nature of the light.
Alas, how should I then,
That never tasted but sour,
But do as I began,
Continually to lour?

But yet perchance some chance
May chance to change my tune;
And when such chance doth chance,
Then shall I thank fortune.
And if I have chance,
Perchance ere it be long
For such a pleasant chance
To sing some pleasant song.

## 26

"Ah, Robin,
Jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy leman doth,
And thou shalt know of mine."

"My lady is unkind, perdie!"
"Alack, why is she so?"
"She loveth another better than me,
And yet she will say no."

"I find no such doubleness,
I find women true.
My lady loveth me doubtless,
And will change for no new."

"Thou art happy while that doth last,
But I say as I find,
That women's love is but a blast
And turneth like the wind."

"If that be true yet as thou sayest
That women turn their heart,
Then speak better of them thou mayest
In hope to have thy part."

"Such folks shall take no harm by love
That can abide their turn;
But I, alas, can no way prove
In love but lack and mourn."

"But if thou wilt avoid thy harm
Learn this lesson of me:
At other fires thyself to warm,
And let them warm with thee."

## 27

Though I cannot your cruelty constrain
For my good will to favour me again,
  Though my true and faithful love
  Have no power your heart to move,
    Yet rue upon my pain.

Though I your thrall must evermore remain
And for your sake my liberty restrain,
  The greatest grace that I do crave
  Is that ye would vouchsafe
    To rue upon my pain.

Though I have not deserved to obtain
So high reward, but this, to serve in vain,
  Though I shall have no redress,
  Yet of right ye can no less
    But rue upon my pain.

But I see well that your high disdain
Will no wise grant that I shall more attain;
  Yet ye must grant at the least
  This my poor and small request:
    Rejoice not at my pain.

## 28

To wish and want and not obtain,
To seek and sue ease of my pain,
Since all that ever I do is vain,
What may it avail me?

Although I strive both day and hour
Against the stream of all power,
If fortune list yet for to lour,
What may it avail me?

If willingly I suffer woe,
If from the fire me list not go,
If then I burn, to plain me so
What may it avail me?

And if the harm that I suffer
Be run too far out of measure,
To seek for help any further
What may it avail me?

What though each heart that heareth me plain
Pitieth and plaineth for my pain?
If I no less in grief remain,
What may it avail me?

Yea, though the want of my relief
Displease the causer of my grief,
Since I remain still in mischief,
What may it avail me?

Such cruel chance doth so me threat
Continually inward to fret,
Then of release for to treat
What may it avail me?

Fortune is deaf unto my call,
My torment moveth her not at all,
And though she turn as doth a ball,
What may it avail me?

For in despair there is no rede;
To want of ear speech is no speed;
To linger still, alive as dead,
What may it avail me?

## 29

My hope, alas, hath me abused,
And vain rejoicing hath me fed;
Lust and joy have me refused,
And careful plaint is in their stead;
Too much avancing slaked my speed;
Mirth hath caused my heaviness;
And I remain all comfortless.

Whereto did I assure my thought
Without displeasure steadfastly?
In fortune's forge my joy was wrought
And is revolted readily.
I am mistaken wonderly;
For I, though nought but faithfulness,
Yet I remain all comfortless.

In gladsome cheer I did delight,
Till that delight did cause my smart
And all was wrong where I thought right;
For right it was, that my true heart
Should not from truth be set apart,
Since truth did cause my hardiness:
Yet I remain all comfortless.

Sometime delight did tune my song,
And led my heart full pleasantly;
And to myself I said among,
"My hap is coming hastily".
But it hath happed contrary.
Assurance causeth my distress,
And I remain all comfortless.

Then if my note now do vary,
  And leave his wonted pleasantness,
The heavy burden that I carry
  Hath altered all my joyfulness:
  No pleasure hath still steadfastness,
But haste hath hurt my happiness;
And I remain all comfortless.

## 30

What death is worse than this,
  When my delight,
My weal, my joy, my bliss,
  Is from my sight?
  Both day and night
My life, alas, I miss:

For though I seem alive,
  My heart is hence;
Thus, bootless for to strive
  Out of presence
  Of my defence,
Toward my death I drive.

Heartless, alas, what man
  May long endure?
Alas, how live I then?
  Since no recure
  May me assure,
My life I well may ban.

Thus doth my torment go
  In deadly dread;
Alas, who might live so,
  Alive as dead,
  Alive to lead
A deadly life in woe?

## 31

Th' en'my of life, decayer of all kind,
That with his cold withers away the green,
This other night me in my bed did find,
And offered me to rid my fever clean.
And I did grant: so did despair me blind.
He drew his bow with arrow sharp and keen,
And strake the place where love had hit before,
And drave the first dart deeper more and more.

## 32

Spite hath no power to make me sad,
Nor scornfulness to make me plain.
It doth suffice that once I had,
And so to leave it is no pain.

Let them frown on that least doth gain;
Who did rejoice must needs be glad:
And though with words thou weenest to reign,
It doth suffice that once I had.

Since that in cheeks thus overthwart
And coyly looks thou dost delight,
It doth suffice that mine thou wert,
Though change hath put thy faith to flight.

Alas, it is a peevish spite
To yield thyself and then to part;
But since thou seest thy faith so light,
It doth suffice that mine thou wert.

And since thy love doth thus decline,
And in thy heart such hate doth grow,
It doth suffice that thou wert mine,
And with good will I quite it so.

Sometime my friend, farewell my foe,
Since thou change I am not thine;
But for relief of all my woe
It doth suffice that thou wert mine.

Praying you all that hears this song
To judge no wight, nor none to blame;
It doth suffice she doth me wrong,
And that herself doth know the same.

And though she change it is no shame;
Their kind it is and hath been long:
Yet I protest she hath no name;
It doth suffice she doth me wrong.

## 33

My lute awake! perform the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
  The end that I have now begun;
For when this song is sung and past,
  My lute be still, for I have done.

As to be heard where ear is none,
As lead to grave in marble stone,
  My song may pierce her heart as soon;
Should we then sigh or sing or moan?
  No, no, my lute, for I have done.

The rocks do not so cruelly
Repulse the waves continually,
  As she my suit and affection,
So that I am past remedy;
  Whereby my lute and I have done.

Proud of the spoil that thou hast got
Of simple hearts thorough love's shot,
  By whom, unkind, thou hast them won,
Think not he hath his bow forgot,
  Although my lute and I have done.

Vengeance shall fall on thy disdain
That makest but game on earnest pain;
  Think not alone under the sun
Unquit to cause thy lovers plain,
  Although my lute and I have done.

Perchance thee lie withered and old
The winter nights that are so cold,
  Plaining in vain unto the moon;
Thy wishes then dare not be told;
  Care then who list, for I have done.

And then may chance thee to repent
The time that thou hast lost and spent
To cause thy lovers sigh and swoon;
Then shalt thou know beauty but lent,
And wish and want as I have done.

Now cease, my lute: this is the last
Labour that thou and I shall waste,
And ended is that we begun;
Now is this song both sung and past:
My lute be still, for I have done.

## 34

Blame not my lute, for he must sound
Of this and that as liketh me;
For lack of wit the lute is bound
To give such tunes as pleaseth me;
Though my songs be somewhat strange,
And speaks such words as touch thy change,
Blame not my lute.

My lute, alas, doth not offend,
Though that perforce he must agree
To sound such tunes as I entend,
To sing to them that heareth me;
Then though my songs be somewhat plain,
And toucheth some that use to feign,
Blame not my lute.

My lute and strings may not deny,
But as I strike they must obey;
Break not them then so wrongfully,
But wreak thyself some wiser way;
And though the songs which I endite
Do quit thy change with rightful spite,
Blame not my lute.

Spite asketh spite and changing change,
And falsed faith must needs be known;
The fault so great, the case so strange,
Of right it must abroad be blown:
Then since that by thine own desert
My songs do tell how true thou art,
Blame not my lute.

Blame but thyself that hast misdone
And well deserved to have blame;
Change thou thy way so evil begone,
And then my lute shall sound that same:
But if till then my fingers play
By thy desert their wonted way,
Blame not my lute.

Farewell, unknown, for though thou break
My strings in spite with great disdain,
Yet I have found out for thy sake
Strings for to string my lute again.
And if perchance this silly rhyme
Do make thee blush at any time,
Blame not my lute.

## 35

If with complaint the pain might be exprest
That inwardly doth cause me sigh and groan,
Your hard heart and your cruel breast
Should sigh and plain for my unrest;
And though it were of stone
Yet should remorse cause it relent and moan.

But since it is so far out of measure
That with my words I can it not contain,
My only trust, my heart's treasure,
Alas, why do I still endure
This restless smart and pain,
Since if ye list ye may my woe restrain?

## 36

Since you will needs that I shall sing
Take it in worth such as I have,
Plenty of plaint, moan and mourning,
In deep despair and deadly pain,
Bootless for boot, crying to crave,
To crave in vain.

Such hammers work within my head
That sound nought else into my ears
But fast at board and wake a-bed—
Such tune the temper of my song
To wail my wrong, that I want tears
To wail my wrong.

Death and despair afore my face
My days decays, my grief doth grow;
The cause thereof is in this place,
Whom cruelty doth still restrain
For to rejoice, though it be woe
To hear me plain.

A broken lute, untuned strings
With such a song may well bear part,
That nother pleaseth him that sings
Nor them that hear, but her alone
That with her heart would strain my heart
To hear it groan.

If it grieve you to hear this same
That you do feel but in my voice,
Consider then what pleasant game
I do sustain in every part
To cause me sing or to rejoice
Within my heart.

## 37

What should I say?
  Since faith is dead,
And truth away
  From you is fled,
  Should I be led
    With doubleness?
    Nay, nay, mistress!

I promised you,
  And you promised me,
To be as true
  As I would be.
  But since I see
    Your double heart,
    Farewell my part!

Though for to take
  It is not my mind
But to forsake,
  [I am not blind],
  And as I find
    So will I trust.
    Farewell, unjust!

Can ye say nay
  But you said
That I alway
  Should be obeyed,
  And thus betrayed
    Or that I wist?
    Farewell, unkist!

## 38

In eternum I was once determed
For to have loved and my mind affirmed,
That with my heart it should be confirmed
In eternum.

Forthwith I found the thing that I might like
And sought with love to warm her heart alike,
For, as methought, I should not see the like
In eternum.

To trace this dance I put myself in prese;
Vain hope did lead and bade I should not cease
To serve to suffer and still to hold my peace,
In eternum.

With this first rule I fordered me apace,
That, as methought, my truth had taken place
With full assurance to stand in her grace
In eternum.

It was not long ere I by proof had found
That feeble building is on feeble ground;
For in her heart this word did never sound,
"In eternum".

In eternum then from my heart I kest
That I had first determed for the best;
Now in the place another thought doth rest,
In eternum.

## 39

Longer to muse
On this refuse
I will not use,
  But study to forget;
Let my all go,
Since well I know
To be my foe
  Her heart is firmly set.

Since my entent,
So truly meant,
Cannot content
  Her mind as I do see;
To tell you plain,
It were in vain
For so small gain
  To lose my liberty.

For if he thrive
That will go strive
A ship to drive
  Against the stream and wind,
Undoubtedly
Then thrive should I
To love truly
  A cruel-hearted mind.

But sith that so
The world doth go
That every woe
  By yielding doth increase,
As I have told
I will be bold,
  Thereby my pains to cease.

Praying you all
That after shall
By fortune fall
  Into this foolish trade,
Have in your mind,
As I do find,
That oft bekind
  All women's love doth fade.

Wherefore apace
Come, take my place,
Some man that hase
  A lust to burn the feet;
For since that she
Refuseth me,
I must agree
  And, perdie, to forget.

## 40

With serving still
  This have I won,
For my goodwill
  To be undone.

And for redress
  Of all my pain,
Disdainfulness
  I have again;

And for reward
  Of all my smart,
Lo, thus unheard
  I must depart!

Wherefore all ye
  That after shall
By fortune be,
  As I am, thrall,

Example take
  What I have won,
Thus for her sake
  To be undone!

## 41

To cause accord or to agree
Two contraries in one degree
And in one point, as seemeth me,
To all man's wit it cannot be;
It is impossible.

Of heat and cold when I complain
And say that heat doth cause my pain
When cold doth sheak me every vein;
And both at once—I say again,
It is impossible.

That man that hath his heart away
(If life liveth there, as men do say)
That he heartless should last one day
Alive, and not to turn to clay,
It is impossible.

'Twixt life and death, say what who saith,
There liveth no life that draweth breath
(They join so near); and eke i' faith
To seek for life by wish of death
It is impossible.

Yet love, that all things doth subdue,
Whose power there may no life eschew,
Hath wrought in me (that I may rue)
These miracles to be so true,
That are impossible.

## 42

All heavy minds
  Do seek to ease their charge,
And that that most them binds
  To let at large.

Then why should I
  Hold pain within my heart,
And may my tune apply
  To ease my smart?

My faithful lute
  Alone shall hear me plain;
For else all other suit
  Is clean in vain.

For where I sue
  Redress of all my grief,
Lo, they do most eschew
  My heart's relief.

Alas, my dear,
  Have I deserved so,
That no help may appear
  Of all my woe?

Whom speak I to,
  Unkind and deaf of ear?
Alas, lo, I go,
  And wot not where.

Where is my thought?
  Where wanders my desire?
Where may the thing be sought
  That I require?

Light in the wind
  Doth flee all my delight;
Where truth and faithful mind
  Are put to flight.

Who shall me give
  Feathered wings for to flee,
The thing that doth me grieve
  That I may see?

Who would go seek
  The cause whereby to plain?
Who would his foe beseek
  For ease of pain?

My chance doth so
  My woful case procure,
To offer to my foe
  My heart to cure.

What hope I then
  To have any redress?
Of whom or where or when
  Who can express?

No! since despair
  Hath set me in this case,
In vain oft in the air
  To say "Alas",

I seek nothing
  But thus for to discharge
My heart of sore sighing,
  To plain at large,

And with my lute
  Sometime to ease my pain,
For else all other suit
  Is clean in vain.

## 43

O goodly hand,
Wherein doth stand
My heart distrast in pain;
Fair hand, alas,
In little space
My life that doth restrain.

O fingers slight,
Departed right,
So long, so small, so round;
Goodly begone,
And yet alone
Most cruel in my wound.

With lilies white
And roses bright
Doth strive thy colour fair;
Nature did lend
Each finger's end
A pearl for to repair.

Consent at last,
Since that thou hast
My heart in thy demesne,
For service true
On me to rue
And reach me love again.

And if not so,
Then with more woe
Enforce thyself to strain
This simple heart,
That suffereth smart,
And rid it out of pain.

## 44

If in the world there be more woe
  Than I have in my heart,
Whereso it is, it doth come fro,
And in my breast there doth it grow,
  For to encrease my smart.
Alas, I am receipt of every care,
  And of my life each sorrow claims his part.
    Who list to live in quietness
By me let him beware,
  For I by high disdain
    Am made without redress,
  And unkindness, alas, hath slain
    My poor true heart all comfortless.

## 45

Sufficed not, madame, that you did tear
  My woful heart, but thus also to-rent
  The weeping paper that to you I sent,
Whereof each letter was written with a tear?

Could not my present pains, alas, suffice
  Your greedy heart? and that my heart doth feel
  Torments that prick more sharper than the steel,
But new and new must to my lot arise?

Use then my death: so shall your cruelty
  Spite of your spite rid me from all my smart,
  And I no more such torments of the heart
Feel as I do. This shalt thou gain thereby.

## 46

Most wretched heart, most miserable,
  Since the comfort is from thee fled,
Since all the truth is turned to fable,
  Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

No, no, I live and must do still,
  Whereof I thank God and no mo.
For I myself have all my will,
  And he is wretched that weens him so.

But yet thou hast both had and lost
  The hope so long that hath thee fed
And all thy travail and all thy cost.
  Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

Some other hope must feed me new.
  If I have lost, I say, what tho?
Despair shall not through [it] insue,
  For he is wretched that weens him so.

The sun, the moon doth frown on thee,
  Thou hast darkness in daylight's stead;
As good in grave as so to be.
  Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

Some pleasant star may shew me light;
  But though the heaven would work me woe,
Who hath himself shall stand upright,
  And he is wretched that weens him so.

Hath he himself that is not sure?
  His trust is like as he hath sped;
Against the stream thou mayst not dure;
  Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

The last is worse; who fears not that
  He hath himself whereso he go;
And he that knoweth what is what
  Saith he is wretched that weens him so.

Seest thou not how they whet their teeth
  Which to touch thee sometime did dread?
They find comfort for thy mischief.
  Most wretched heart, why art thou not dead?

What though that curs do fall by kind
  Of him that hath the overthrow?
All that cannot oppress my mind,
  For he is wretched that weens him so.

Yet can it not be then denied,
  It is as certain as thy creed,
Thy great unhap thou canst not hide.
  Unhappy then why art thou not dead?

Unhappy, but no wretch therefore,
  For hap doth come again and go;
For which I keep myself in store,
  Since unhap cannot kill me so.

## 47

From these high hills as when a spring doth fall,
It trilleth down with still and subtle course;
Of this and that it gathers aye and shall,
Till it have just off flowed the stream and force;
Then at the foot it rageth over all:
So fareth love when he hath ta'en a source;
His rein is rage, resistance 'vaileth none;
The first eschew is remedy alone.

## 48

Tagus, farewell, that westward with thy streams
Turns up the grains of gold already tried;
With spur and sail for I go seek the Thames,
Gainward the sun that showeth her wealthy pride,
And to the town that Brutus sought by dreams
Like bended moon doth lend her lusty side.
My King, my country, alone for whom I live,
Of mighty love the wings for this me give.

## 49

### AN EPITAPH OF SIR THOMAS GRAVENER, KNIGHT

Under this stone there lieth at rest
  A friendly man, a worthy knight,
Whose heart and mind was ever prest
  To favour truth, to farther right.

The poor's defence, his neighbours' aid,
  Most kind always unto his kin,
That stint all service that might be stayed,
  Whose gentle grace great love did win.

A man that was full earnest set
  To serve his prince at all assays:
No sickness could him from that let,
  Which was the shortening of his days.

His life was good, he died full well;
  The body here, the soul in bliss.
With length of words why should I tell
  Or farther shew that well known is?
Since that the tears of more and less
Right well declare his worthiness.

Vivit post funera virtus.

## 50

What rage is this? what furour of what kind?
What power, what plague doth weary thus my mind?
Within my bones to rankle is assigned
  What poison, pleasant sweet?

Lo, see, mine eyes swell with continual tears;
The body still away sleepless it wears;
My food nothing my fainting strength repairs,
  Nor doth my limbs sustain.

In deep wide wound the deadly stroke doth turn
To cured scar that never shall return.
Go to, triumph, rejoice thy goodly turn,
  Thy friend thou dost oppress.

Oppress thou dost, and hast of him no cure;
Nor yet my plaint no pity can procure,
Fierce tiger fell, hard rock without recure,
  Cruel rebel to love!

Once may thou love, never beloved again;
So love thou still and not thy love obtain;
So wrathful love with spites of just disdain
  May fret thy cruel heart!

## 51

The pillar perisht is whereto I leant,
The strongest stay of mine unquiet mind;
The like of it no man again can find,
From East to West still seeking though he went.
To mine unhap! for hap away hath rent
Of all my joy the very bark and rind;
And I, alas, by chance am thus assigned
Daily to mourn till death do it relent.
But since that thus it is by destiny,
What can I more but have a woful heart—
My pen in plaint, my voice in careful cry,
My mind in woe, my body full of smart,
And I myself myself always to hate—
Till dreadful death do ease my doleful state?

## 52

Sighs are my food, drink are my tears
(Clinking of fetters such music would crave);
Stink and close air away my life wears;
Innocency is all the hope I have.
Rain, wind or weather I judge by mine ears.
Malice assaulted that righteousness should have.
Sure I am, Brian, this wound shall heal again,
But yet, alas, the scar shall still remain.

## 53

Lux, my fair falcon, and your fellows all,
How well pleasant it were your liberty:
Ye not forsake me that fair might ye befall.
But they that sometime liked my company
Like lice away from dead bodies they crawl:
Lo, what a proof in light adversity!
But ye, my birds, I swear by all your bells
Ye be my friends and so be but few else.

## 54

Within my breast I never thought it gain
Of gentle mind the freedom for to lose;
Nor in my heart sank never such disdain
To be a forger, faults for to disclose;
Nor can I not endure the truth to glose,
To set a gloss upon an earnest pain;
Nor am I not in number one of those
That list to blow retreat to every train.

## 55

I am as I am and so will I be,
But how that I am none knoweth truly;
Be it evil be it well, be I bond be I free,
I am as I am and so will I be.

I lead my life indifferently;
I mean nothing but honestly;
And though folks judge full diversely,
I am as I am and so will I die.

I do not rejoice nor yet complain,
Both mirth and sadness I do refrain,
And use the mean, since folk will feign;
Yet I am as I am, be it pleasure or pain.

Divers do judge as they do trow,
Some of pleasure and some of woe,
Yet for all that nothing they know;
But I am as I am wheresoever I go.

But since judgers do thus decay,
Let every man his judgment say;
I will it take in sport and play,
For I am as I am whosoever say nay.

Who judgeth well, well God him send;
Who judgeth evil, God them amend;
To judge the best therefore intend,
For I am as I am and so will I end.

Yet some there be that take delight
To judge folks' thoughts for envy and spite;
But whether they judge me wrong or right,
I am as I am and so do I write.

Praying you all that this do read
To trust it as you do your creed,
And not to think I change my weed,
For I am as I am however I speed.

But how that is I leave to you;
Judge as ye list false or true;
Ye know no more than afore ye knew,
Yet I am as I am whatever ensue.

And from this mind I will not flee,
But to you all that misjudge me,
I do protest as ye may see,
That I am as I am and so will be.

## 56

Throughout the world if it were sought,
  Fair words enough a man shall find;
They be good cheap, they cost right nought,
  Their substance is but only wind.
But well to say and so to mean,
That sweet accord is seldom seen.

## 57

If thou wilt mighty be, flee from the rage
  Of cruel will, and see thou keep thee free
From the foul yoke of sensual bondage;
  For though thy empire stretch to Indian sea
  And for thy fear trembleth the farthest Thule,
If thy desire hath over thee the power,
Subject then art thou and no governour.

If to be noble and high thy mind be moved,
  Consider well thy ground and thy beginning;
For he that hath each star in heaven fixed,
  And gives the moon her horns and her eclipsing,
  Alike hath made thee noble in his working:
So that wretched no way thou may be,
Except foul lust and vice do conquer thee.

All were it so thou had a flood of gold
  Unto thy thirst, yet should it not suffice;
And though with Indian stones, a thousand fold
  More precious than can thyself devise,
  Ycharged were thy back; thy covetise
And busy biting yet should never let
Thy wretched life, ne do thy death profet.

## 58

### FROM THE FIRST SATIRE

This maketh me at home to hunt and to hawk
And in foul weder at my book to sit;

In frost and snow then with my bow to stalk.
No man doth mark whereso I ride or go.
In lusty leas at liberty I walk

(And of these news I feel nor weal nor woe,
Sauf that a clog doth hang yet at my heel—
No force for that, for it is ordered so)

That I may leap both hedge and dike full well.
I am not now in France to judge the wine,
With saffry sauce the delicates to feel;

Nor yet in Spain, where one must him incline
Rather then to be outwardly to seem—
I meddle not with wits that be so fine;

Nor Flanders cheer letteth not my sight to deem
Of black and white, nor taketh my wit away
With beastliness—they beasts do so esteem;

Nor I am not where Christ is given in prey
For money, poison and traison, at Rome—
A common practice used night and day:

But here I am in Kent and Christendom
Among the muses where I read and rhyme;
Where if thou list, my Poynz, for to come,
Thou shalt be judge how I do spend my time.

## 59

### THE SECOND SATIRE

My mother's maids, when they did sew and spin,
They sang sometime a song of the field mouse,
That for because her livelood was but thin

Would needs go seek her townish sister's house.
She thought herself endured to much pain:
The stormy blasts her cave so sore did souse

That when the furrows swimmed with the rain
She must lie cold and wet in sorry plight;
And worse than that, bare meat there did remain

To comfort her when she her house had dight—
Sometime a barleycorn, sometime a bean,
For which she laboured hard both day and night

In harvest time whilst she might go and glean—
And when her store was strcyed with the flood
Then well away! for she undone was clean.

Then she was fain to take instead of food
Sleep, if she might, her hunger to beguile.
"My sister" quoth she "hath a living good,

And hence from me she dwelleth not a mile.
In cold and storm she lieth warm and dry
In bed of down; the dirt doth not defile

Her tender foot; she laboureth not as I.
Richly she feedeth and at the rich man's cost,
And for her meat she needs not crave or cry.

By sea, by land, of delicates the most
Her cater seeks and spareth for no peril.
She feedeth on boiled, baken meat and roast,

And hath thereof neither charge nor travail;
And when she list the liquor of the grape
Doth glad her heart till that her belly swell."

And at this journey she maketh but a jape
And forth she goeth, trusting of all this wealth
With her sister her part so for to shape

That, if she might keep herself in health,
To live a lady while her life doth last.
And to the door now is she come by stealth,

And with her foot anon she scrapeth full fast.
Th' other for fear durst not well scarce appear,
Of every noise so was the wretch aghast.

At last she asked softly who was there;
And in her language as well as she could,
"Peep" quoth the other, "sister, I am here".

"Peace" quoth the town mouse, "why speakest thou so loud?"
And by the hand she took her fair and well.
"Welcome" quoth she, "my sister, by the rood."

She feasted her that joy it was to tell
The fare they had; they drank the wine so clear,
And as to purpose now and then it fell

She cheered her with "How, sister, what cheer?"
Amids this joy befell a sorry chance,
That, well away! the stranger bought full dear

The fare she had; for as she looks askance
Under a stool she spied two steaming eyes
In a round head with sharp ears. In France

Was never mouse so feared, for though the unwise
Had not yseen such a beast before
Yet had nature taught her after her guise

To know her foe and dread him evermore.
The towny mouse fled—she knew whither to go:
Th' other had no shift, but wondrous sore

Feared of her life, at home she wished her tho;
And to the door, alas, as she did skip—
Th' heaven it would, lo, and eke her chance was so—

At the threshold her silly foot did trip,
And ere she might recover it again
The traitor cat had caught her by the hip

And made her there against her will remain,
That had forgotten her poor surety and rest
For seeming wealth wherein she thought to reign.

Alas, my Poynz, how men do seek the best
And find the worst, by error as they stray!
And no marvail, when sight is so opprest

And blind the guide. Anon out of the way
Goeth guide and all in seeking quiet life.
O wretched minds! there is no gold that may

Grant that ye seek, no war, no peace, no strife.
No, no, although thy head were hoopt with gold,
Sergeant with mace, hawbert, sword, nor knife

Cannot repulse the care that follow should.
Each kind of life hath with him his disease:
Live in delight even as thy lust would,

And thou shalt find when lust doth most thee please
It irketh straight and by itself doth fade.
A small thing it is that may thy mind appease.

None of ye all there is that is so mad
To seek grapes upon brambles or breers;
Nor none I trow that hath his wit so bad

To set his hay for conies over rivers;
Ne ye set not a drag net for an hare.
And yet the thing that most is your desire

Ye do misseek with more travail and care.
Make plain thy heart, that it be not knotted
With hope or dread; and see thy will be bare

From all affects whom vice hath ever spotted.
Thyself content with that is thee assigned,
And use it well that is to thee allotted.

Then seek no more out of thyself to find
The thing that thou hast sought so long before,
For thou shalt feel it sitting in thy mind;

Mad, if ye list to continue your sore,
Let present pass and gape on time to come,
And deep yourself in travail more and more.

Henceforth, my Poynz, this shall be all and some,
These wretched fools shall have nought else of me.
But to the great God and to his high doom

None other pain pray I for them to be
But, when the rage doth lead them from the right,
That looking backwards Virtue they may see

Even as she is, so goodly fair and bright;
And whilst they clasp their lusts in arms across
Grant them, good Lord, as thou mayst of thy might,
To fret inwards for losing such a loss.

## 60

### THE SIXTH PENITENTIAL PSALM

*De profundis clamavi*

From depth of sin and from a deep despair,
From depth of death, from depth of heartes sorrow,
From this deep cave, of darkness deep repair,

To thee have I called, O Lord, to be my borrow.
Thou in my voice, O Lord, perceive and hear
My heart, my hope, my plaint, my overthrow,

My will to rise; and let by grant appear
That to my voice thine ears do well entend.
No place so far that to thee is not near,

No depth so deep that thou ne mayst extend
Thine ear thereto. Hear then my woful plaint,
For, Lord, if thou do observe what men offend

And put thy native mercy in restraint,
If just exaction demand recompense,
Who may endure, O Lord, who shall not faint

At such account? Dread and not reverence
Should so reign large. But thou seeks rather love,
For in thy hand is mercy's residence,

By hope whereof thou dost our heartes move.
I in the Lord have ever set my trust,
My soul such trust doth evermore approve.

Thy holy word of eterne excellence,
Thy mercy's promise that is always just,
Have been my stay, my pillar and pretence.

My soul in God hath more desirous trust
Than hath the watchman looking for the day
By the relief to quench of sleep the thirst.

Let Israel trust unto the Lord alway
For grace and favour are his property.
Plenteous ransome shall come with him, I say,
And shall redeem all our iniquity.

## SURREY'S EPITAPH ON WYATT

Wyatt resteth here that quick could never rest,
Whose heavenly gifts encreased by disdain
And virtue sank the deeper in his breast—
Such profit he by envy could obtain.

A head where wisdom mysteries did frame,
Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain
As on a stithe, where that some work of fame
Was daily wrought to turn to Britain's gain.

A visage stern and mild where both did grow
Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoice;
Amid great storms whom grace assured so
To live upright and smile at fortune's choice.

A hand that taught what might be said in rhyme,
That reft Chaucer the glory of his wit;
A mark the which unparfited for time
Some may approach but never none shall hit.

A tongue that served in foreign realms his king,
Whose courteous talk to virtue did enflame
Each noble heart, a worthy guide to bring
Our English youth by travail unto fame.

An eye whose judgment none affect could blind
Friends to allure and foes to reconcile,
Whose piercing look did represent a mind
With virtue fraught, reposed, void of guile.

A heart where dread was never so imprest
To hide the thought that might the truth avance,
In neither fortune lost nor yet represt
To swell in wealth nor yield unto mischance.

## SURREY'S EPITAPH ON WYATT

A valiant corpse where force and beauty met,
  Happy, alas, too happy but for foes,
Lived and ran the race that nature set;
  Of manhood's shape, where she the mould did lose.

But to the heavens that simple soul is fled,
  Which left with such as covet Christ to know
Witness of faith that never shall be dead,
  Sent for our health but not received so.

Thus for our guilt this jewel have we lost:
The earth his bones, the heavens possess his ghost.

# NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

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[1] P. 3. The principal sources for Wyatt's life are: passages in his own poems, his letters, and speeches; the *Calendar of State Papers*; Brewer, Gairdner and Brodie, *Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII*; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1850, article on "Unpublished Anecdotes of Sir Thomas Wyatt"; Leland. Nott gives a full biography according to the material known in his day. W. E. Simonds, *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Poems* (Strassburg, 1889), gives biography with added material. There is an excellent summary in Padelford, pp. 105–11, and a useful table in Foxwell, I, pp. xiii-xv. J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*, pp. 445–86, interweaves biography with his study of Wyatt's work and omits detailed references, which can be found in the books mentioned above.

[2] P. 13. Chambers and Sidgwick, LV.

[3] P. 14. *Oxford Book*, 23; Chambers and Sidgwick, LIV.

[4] P. 15. *Oxford Book*, 1; Chambers and Sidgwick, II.

[5] P. 15. *Oxford Book*, 2–5; Chambers and Sidgwick, IV–VII, XLVIII, XLIX, XCII.

[6] P. 15. *Oxford Book*, 27; Chambers and Sidgwick, XXXI.

[7] P. 15. Chambers and Sidgwick, p. 280.

[8] P. 16. By Farding, preserved in the court MS. of Henry VIII, British Museum Additional 31922, printed by Flügel in *Anglia*, XII, p. 232.

[9] P. 16. Same source as for note [8]. *Anglia*, XII, p. 254.

[10] P. 16. Do. *Anglia*, XII, p. 253.

[11] P. 17. I, p. 288.

[12] P. 18. From Suckling's *Tragedy of Brennoralt.*

[13] P. 19. From *The Ship of Fools.* T. F. Jamieson's *Barclay*, I, p. 144.

[14] P. 19. See Foxwell, *Study*, Chap. VI. Miss Foxwell may be right, but anyhow Hawes, Barclay and the songs in heavier metres in the early Tudor song-books are sufficient models by themselves.

[15] P. 22. W. L. Renwick in his recent *Edmund Spenser* develops the idea excellently in his first chapter.

[16] P. 22. Foxwell, II, p. 237.

[17] P. 24. Much work has gone to tracing Wyatt's sources. The pioneers were Nott, K. Koppel in *Studien zur Geschichte des englischen Petrarchismus* in *Romanische Forschungen*, 5.

[18] P. 24. *Studies in Literature*, I, p. 60.

[19] P. 28. From "Avising the bright beams". Foxwell, I, p. 27.

[20] P. 28. From "Such vain thought". Foxwell, I, p. 33.

[21] P. 28. From "How oft have I". Foxwell, I, p. 30.

[22] P. 31. Chambers and Sidgwick, p. 282.

[23] P. 34. See, for instance, *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, III, p. 170.

[24] P. 34. Chambers and Sidgwick, III.

[25] P. 34. From "Bytuene Mersh ant Averil". *Oxford Book*, 2; Chambers and Sidgwick, IV.

[26] P. 34. From "As ye came from the holy land". *Oxford Book*, 26.

[27] P. 36. Gratitude is due to Professor Grierson for having restored the MS. reading of *groane* instead of *grow* of the printed editions, thereby increasing the power of the passage incalculably. The rhythmical stress on *grow*, almost impossible

to avoid, would make the sense foolish; whereas *groane* (as well as corresponding better to *weeping*) is a word that gains by being stressed. See Grierson's *Donne*, I, p. 29; II, pp. 26–7.

[28] P. 39. From "If fancy would favour". Foxwell, I, p. 96.

[29] P. 39. From "It was my choice". Foxwell, I, p. 287.

[30] P. 40. The statement in *Camb. Hist. Eng. Lit.*, III, p. 172, that "Wyatt's stanzas are always short, and simple in construction, without much involution of rhyme", is false.

[31] P. 42. From "What meaneth this". Foxwell, I, p. 262.

[32] P. 42. The stanzas quoted begin the poem. Foxwell, I, p. 155.

[33] P. 45. Foxwell, *Study*, pp. 88–9.

[34] P. 45. J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*, p. 479, after comparing Wyatt's translation with a passage from Alamanni, has the curious statement that Wyatt keeps the metre exactly. In point of fact he twice breaks the tercet in the passage quoted, where Alamanni keeps it. Berdan also attacks Saintsbury's excellent remarks (*History of Prosody*, I, pp. 311–2) on Wyatt's use of the *terza rima*.

[35] P. 46. Satires, I, 10–16.

[36] P. 47. Satires, I, 31.

[37] P. 48. *Study*, p. 98.

[38] P. 48. Foxwell, I, p. 136.

[39] P. 53. See Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, II, pp. 62–65.

[40] P. 55. P. cxxvi.

[41] P. 56. Pp. 445–86.

# NOTES TO THE POEMS

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In commenting on the separate poems I have indicated the source of the text by abbreviations placed immediately after the titles of the poems.

E=Egerton MS. 2711 in the British Museum.
D=Additional MS. 17492 in the British Museum.
T=Tottell's Miscellany.
A=Additional MS. 28635 in the British Museum.
H=Harleian MS. 78 in the British Museum.
P=Additional MS. 36529 in the British Museum.

For an account of the chief sources of the text see Introduction, p. 51.

*Poem.*

1. IT MAY BE GOOD (E). The jumpy rhythm accords well with the supposed jumpy state of the lover's mind. He knows he is being tricked and yet cannot quite bring himself to break loose.

5. *windy*, "light and empty": *quaint* has here its old sense of "cunning".

10. *hopes* E MS., *hope*: Tottell, *hopes thus*. *Hopes* is required to match *seeketh* and *hase*. *Hase* is a form of "has".

11. This line refers back to the *maze* in 8. He is free to range within the maze but cannot get out.

17. *put the proof in ure*, "applied the test". *Ure*=use.

19. An imaginary person answers Wyatt in this line, or Wyatt speaks with himself.

2. TAKE HEED BETIME (D). This poem admirably gives the impression, by the deliberateness of its movement, by the monotony of the triple rhyme and of the refrain, and by the many unemphatic and yet clearly articulated monosyllables, of someone speaking in a clear, earnest whisper. Con-

trast the tone of the next poem (No. 3), which has the same theme.

2. *loving* is a noun governed by *hide*, to which *eyes* is the subject. *Eyes* is probably a dissyllable.

15. *prove themselves but fools*, i.e. "give themselves away."

18. *leave it in your lap*, "thrust it upon your notice", "tell you plainly". Cf. Elyot, *The Governour*, II, 4, "Let yonge gentilmen have often times told to them, and (as it is vulgarly spoken) layde in their lappes, how, etc. . . ." Line 19 is governed, I take it, by *leave it in your lap*, "make it plain that it is a rare occurrence for love to go undetected".

3. YOUR LOOKS SO OFTEN CAST (T). This trivial lyric tinkles prettily: Wyatt must have been young or in a youthful mood when he wrote it. The happy impetus of the poem makes the reader delighted at hearing the same thing said in half a dozen slightly different ways.

10. *brenning*, "burning".

25–6. *fet*, "fetched", "derived"; *wry*, "cover" (see Chaucer, *Legend of Good Women*, 735). The sense would be, "you give a far-fetched explanation of your sighs in order to conceal your real passion."

27. *ne'er the narre*, "never the nearer" (*sc.*, to your object).

4. PERDIE, I SAID IT NOT (D). Though constructed on a different rhyme scheme this poem runs very much like the last, "Your looks so often cast". There is the same happy impetus sweeping both poems along. If "Your looks so often cast" tinkles, this poem charms by its animated patter, its diminutive eloquence. The sudden change from defence to counter-attack in the last two

verses reinforces the animation of the rhythm. The poem is adapted from Italian originals (see Foxwell, II, pp. 167–8).

26. D MS. (which I follow) reads "*encresst*", which word must be a participle agreeing with "*beauty*" in 25: the main verb to *beauty* will be *may turn* in 30. In Tottell the reading is *encrease*, which makes the sense easier and the whole verse better in keeping with the other verses.

5. My galley charged (E). This sonnet is included not for its merit but as the best-known example of Wyatt's early translations from Italian. Courthope compares Wyatt's translation with Petrarch's original (*History of English Poetry*, II, pp. 50–3), and justly calls attention to the inadequacy of Wyatt's translation, his failure to bring out the full sense of the original, and to the excellence of the line

> The stars be hid that led me to this pain.

A more serious charge than failure to bring out the sense of the original could be made: obscurity. Without reference to Petrarch it is difficult to make out what certain passages mean. Wyatt did not embody Petrarch's fancy in a new creation, but hammered out his lines with the original before his eye.

1. *charged with forgetfulness* (translated from Petrarch's *colma d'oblio*) merely means oppressed by love so as to forget all else.

3. *mine enemy*=Cupid.

5–6. The Italian makes the meaning clear. *As though* must go closely with *in readiness*. "Every oar is a thought ready to think that death is a small matter in this extremity."

8. *sights*, "sighs".

11. *wreathed* translates the Italian *attorto* and refers to the cords in the previous line.

6. My love is like (D). This nine-lined epigram in manner resembles the Elizabethan sonnet closer than many of Wyatt's sonnets. The final couplet might almost come from a sonnet of Shakespeare.

7. A face that should (P).

2. *lovely* differs from *fair* not in degree but in quality. *Fair* here signifies regular beauty, *lovely* attractive or lovable beauty.

8. Madame, withouten many words (E). Even so slight a poem as this illustrates Wyatt's powers of varied and expressive emphasis, and his tendency to be vivid and dramatic rather than merely sweet and musical. In reading the poem we believe the imagined speaker to be talking: we are not merely pleased with the pretty sounds the poet makes.

For the French original from which this poem is adapted, see Foxwell, II, pp. 87–8.

3. *bourds*, "mockery".

4. *shew it so*, "show that you are willing".

12. "And I shall be my own master, and your servant no longer."

9. And wilt thou leave me thus? (D). The tone of this lyric is one of delicate yet passionate pleading. The pleading is brought out admirably by the word *strong* in the second verse, which implies not only that the lady is powerful and maybe hard-hearted but that the lover is weak, that he cannot demand his boon, but must beg it pleadingly. One naturally thinks of Bridges' "I will not let thee go" as a comparison, but it works harder for its effect, lacking the (apparently) unstriving ease of the older poem.

4. *grame*, "sorrow".

9. *among* is the obsolete adverb meaning "all the time".

10. DISDAIN ME NOT (T). This poem is found in *The Courte of Venus*, an early printed anthology of which two fragments are known, one formerly in the Britwell Court Library, the other in the Bodleian. It is found also in Tottell. I agree with Miss Foxwell in thinking that the version in *The Courte of Venus* is the original (see Foxwell, II, p. 174), for there are signs that Tottell's editor has, as usual, planed away some of the irregularities. Compare

I meane nothing but honesty (*Courte of Venus*)

with

I meane ye not but honestly (Tottell)

and again

Refuse me not that I am so true (*Courte of Venus*)

with

Refuse me not that am so true (Tottell).

As however the version in *The Courte of Venus* is defective by a line, I give the version in Tottell with the addition of the refrain as found in *The Courte of Venus*.

8. *fantasy*, "love" (like "fancy").

11. IS IT POSSIBLE? (D). The poem is a vivid little dramatic soliloquy of the lover reviewing the storm that has passed.

17. *to spy it*, "to see the truth".

28. *preve*, "prove".

29–30. "Since ladies can please themselves as to whom they marry and are not forced, every sort of wilfulness must be allowed them."

12. FORGET NOT YET (D). It is almost as if Wyatt had been thinking of church ritual when he wrote this beautiful and solemn love-litany. Certainly the line

*Forget not yet, forget not this*

suggests on the word *this* the sudden change of musical note that a priest would make intoning.

1–2. *entent*, "endeavour". "Do not forget the proved endeavour of the faithfulness I have shown."

3. *travail.*

6. *whan*, "when".

9. *assays*, "tribulations".

11. *denays*, "refusals". Nott quite unjustifiably emended the word into *delays*, a reading that persists in most anthologies.

13. Nott again unjustifiably reads *Forget not! oh! forget . . .*, which is the common reading. There is not a little beauty in the change, but that is not reason enough for rewriting Wyatt.

13. THEY FLEE FROM ME (E). This poem illustrates, perhaps better than any other, the liberties taken by the editor of Tottell with Wyatt's text. For instance, he emended

*With naked foot stalking in my chamber*

into

*With naked foot stalking* within *my chamber*

thereby turning a beautifully expressed gliding motion into a dance. Again

*It was no dream; I lay broad waking*

becomes

*It was no dream,* for *I lay broad awaking,*

which subtracts about half the wonder from the line. On the other hand it might be thought that the substitution by Tottell of *bitter* for *strange* in line 17 has its merits and that

*"How like you this?"—what hath she now deserved?*

Tottell's version of the last line (I give the punctuation of *The Oxford Book of English Verse*) with its indignant repetition of *How like you this?* of line 14, is more telling than

*I fain would know what she hath deserved*

of the E MS. The fact remains however that much of the poem's charm and force lies just in the expressive irregularity of rhythm which the E MS. gives and which Tottell emends away. The rhythm is quite unlike that of any other poem: slow and halting in part, but full of strange starts and surprises and on the whole astonishingly varied. It expresses a curious mood of passionate but trance-like retrospection. For instance, the line

*That now are wild and do not remember*

gives the feeling, by the heavy pause we are forced to make on the word *wild* and the consequent effort of continuing, of slow fitful thought. The middle verse with its vivid recollection moves more freely, gaining speed not only by a smoother rhythm but by the shortened line

*Therewith all sweetly did me kiss.*

The long-drawn-out syllables in the first line of the last verse express the amazed assurance that it was sober fact after all.

I cannot refrain from giving Nott's "explanation" of the poem's meaning (p. 546). "Under

the figure of a Lady offering to him unsolicited the tenderest marks of affection, he describes in a lively manner his early good fortune and success in life; when, as he expresses himself in the ode preceding, using the same metaphorical language adopted in the present ode, 'Methought, Fortune me kiss'd'. Following the same figure he naturally refers his subsequent misfortunes to that constitutional levity, that strange fashion of forsaking, which is too common with the gentler sex". The editor of Tottell did not perceive this pure allegorical meaning, for he heads the lyric "The lover sheweth how he is forsaken of such as he sometime enjoyed"; nor did Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who heads the poem in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, "Vixi puellis nuper idoneus".

5. *put themselves in danger*, either "ran the risk of scandal", or "put themselves within my power", according to the early meaning of the word "danger". The second meaning better fits the metaphor of "taking bread at my hand".

13–14. "The kiss", says Miss Foxwell (II, p. 88) in comment on these lines, "was the ordinary form of salutation among the upper classes of Wiat's day". Does she imply that the high-born Tudor maiden was in the habit of whispering, "Dear heart, how like you this?" when receiving the customary salutation from a gentleman?

18. *of her goodness:* sarcastic.

19. *new-fangleness*, "fickleness".

20. *kindely:* a trisyllable?

14. THERE WAS NEVER NOTHING (E). The theme of this (for Wyatt) unusually pathetic song may be merely a lovers' quarrel, but it may be something

more serious. The lady "cannot be relieved"—perhaps because the speaker is bound by another tie. Hence the vigour with which he curses fortune. The more serious situation might suit Wyatt's own case well enough. Charming and unhappily married, he may have felt and caused such passions as this poem exhibits. Just as likely he may have imagined the situation to which he has given such an appearance of reality.

6. *sight*, "sighed".

19. *remove*, "change my affection".

15. PATIENCE, THOUGH I HAVE NOT (E). Wyatt plays beautifully with the word *patience*: it is the first word of the first three verses; it is the first word in three lines of the last verse; and, pronounced as a trisyllable, it ends the poem. The drawing out of the word in the last line to a trisyllable is expressive of the quality of which the word is the symbol.

16. SINCE LOVE WILL NEEDS (T).

15. *sterve*, "die".

17. YE KNOW MY HEART (D and E). A good example of Wyatt's command of intricate stanzas. Here the intricate stanza is made to express a fine range of tone. The lover speaks amply and eloquently in the long lines at the beginning, barely and pleadingly in the short lines in the middle, and with measured and conclusive emphasis in the final couplet.

32. In the E MS. a space was left between *your* and *heart* for the insertion of a word.

18. I ABIDE AND ABIDE (D). This sonnet is included as a curious reversion to the archaic manner of Skelton. The reversion is the more curious in the exotic form of the sonnet. Wyatt adapts from Serafino (see Foxwell, II, pp. 48–9).

1–2. Miss Foxwell annotates: "The 'olde proverbe' is found in the Envoy to the 'Plaint'," Thynne's edition of *Chaucer*, published in 1532—

> Better is it to suffer and fortune abide
> Than hastily to clime and sodenly to slide."

6. Sarcastic.

8. *nother*, "neither".

10. *as who sayeth*, "what one might call".

14. *then*, "than".

19. DIVERS DOTH USE (D). This sonnet is included not only for its merit but as an example of the regularity of rhythm to which Wyatt ultimately attained in his sonnets.

3. *lynn*, "cease".

12. *feed*, *sc.*, with false hopes.

20. WHAT NO, PERDIE (E). From its place in the MS. the rondeau would be later than the others, dating between 1532 and 1536. It has been traced to no source. It is easily the best of the rondeaus, and the only one that has much poetical value. The effect of the whole is marred by the monotony of the rhyming participles, but no one in the years to which the poem belongs could have achieved the free movement of the last six lines, but Wyatt.

3–4. It is difficult to get a tolerable rhythm from these lines. Perhaps they might be read thus:

> *With wórds | and chéer | so contrár | ying*
> *Sweét | and soúr | coúnter | weighing.*

6. *ure*, "use".

7. *cure*, "care". *Heartes*, probably a dissyllable.

21. When first mine eyes (T).

12. "Had been dumb so that they had not moved at all"

22. Tangled I was (D). The eager way in which the lover enumerates his past woes well expresses his joy at having escaped them. The poem is adapted from the Italian of Serafino (see Foxwell, II, p. 166).

1. Read *tángled Í*, the line runs well enough. Or, as Miss Foxwell suggests, we can here as in 22 pronounce *loves* as a dissyllable.

23. Ah, my heart, ah (D). The tone of this poem is plaintively but not too seriously reproachful. The lover is not so very sorry to be in love once more.

9–10. "When you were well, you could not keep (too bold!) from turning again to love." Nott (p. 251) puts a stop at the end of line 9 as well as at the end of 10; but with this punctuation *was* would be required instead of *were*.

14. *loves*, a dissyllable.

24. At most mischief (E).

1. *at most mischief*, "at the highest pitch of suffering".

25. Marvel no more (E). This poem is an exhilarating example of lyrical high spirits; the outrageous mixture of conflicting parts is carried off by the youthful *élan* of the poet. The first two lines are of a lyric quality that would do any poet credit; there is a staggering mixture of metaphor in the second half of the first stanza; there is platitude at the beginning of the second stanza comparable to Tilburina's saying

> "that when
> The soul is sunk in comfortless despair
> It cannot taste of merriment";

and there is a sheer kicking up of heels in the

last stanza, offensive perhaps to some but to others not unattractive.

15. *overthwart*, "perverse".

30. *perchance* must govern *to sing* in 32 and mean "it may happen that . . ."

26. AH, ROBIN (E). I have followed Miss Foxwell in inserting lines 17–20 from the D MS. See Foxwell, II, p. 91. I have included this song rather because it is different from the rest of Wyatt and because the Clown in *Twelfth Night*, IV, 2, 79 sings it than for its merit. As a song it may have been very attractive.

8. *yet*, "still".

17. *if that . . . yet*, "even though".

24. *lack* and *mourn* seem to be infinitive nouns.

27. THOUGH I CANNOT (E). A lyric of this kind, so varied in sound by reason of the differing lengths of the lines within the stanza and of the shift of rhythm from iambic to trochaic and back, looks forward to the Elizabethans. Campion himself could hardly better its supple and yielding movement. It is interesting to know that in the last line Wyatt originally wrote "to rue upon my pain": the alteration to "rejoice not at my pain" is in his own hand. The change makes an effective climax.

18. Accent *must*: this prepares one for the climax in the last line.

28. TO WISH AND WANT (E). The real qualities of this song, abounding gaiety and youthfulness, are quite out of keeping with the nominal subject. Only in the beautiful last verse does the tone become sad.

29. MY HOPE ALAS (E).

24. *among* is the obsolete adverb meaning "all the time".

29. *then* should be accented.

32–5. The monotony of rhyme here is most effective. It suggests an accumulation of woes and, what is more, that the poet stops in the middle of a long list of complaining lines, lost in his melancholy. He is, as it were, unconscious of his listener, who steals tiptoe from the room.

30. WHAT DEATH (E). This little lyric, though founded on the fantastic and trite notion that the lover, having parted with his heart, must needs be near death, is yet of high quality. Wyatt by his cunning arrangement is able to put a powerful accent on a large proportion of the words he uses, thus expressing not a little feeling. For instance, in the lines

> Heartless, alas, what man
> May long endure?

every word but the auxiliary must be strongly accented, and the word *heartless*, the most significant word, very strongly.

3. This line originally read *My worldly joy and bliss*.

18. *ban*, "curse".

31. TH' EN'MY OF LIFE (E). This epigram is included not for its merit but as an example of competent and achieved adaptation of an Italianate fancy. Unlike the early sonnets and certain of the epigrams, it is metrically not an experiment but a finished native product. The Italianate fancy has been thoroughly anglicised.

32. SPITE HATH NO POWER (D). This and the two following poems show with what seriousness and force Wyatt could treat the theme of "Adieu, love, untrue love". It is such poems that must

have persuaded Courthope to attach that rather unfortunate and too easily remembered epithet "manly" to Wyatt's poetry (*History of English Poetry*, II, p. 66). Wyatt was no more manly than Surrey, but he had a wider range of feeling when he wrote about the human heart and saw more deeply into it.

5. "Let those who enjoy no favours at all go on frowning."

9. *overthwart* has literally and metaphorically the meaning of the modern "cross".

10. *coyly*, "coy".

25. *hears*, the northern plural.

33. My lute awake! (E). See Introduction, p. 33. That this lyric was early famous is indicated by its being adapted by one John Hall in 1565 for pious use. The adapted version begins, "My lute awake! and praise the Lord"; one of the verses runs:

> This pleasant song shall not sung be
> To the goddess of lechery,
> Nor to nothing under the sun
> But praising of the Almighty,
> My lute and I, till we have done.

For the whole, see Nott, p. 532.

7–8. "It is as difficult for my song to reach her heart as it is for lead to cut letters in marble."

26–35. *perchance thee lie*, etc. Of the odes of Horace that refer to amorous old women, I, 25, addressed to Lyde, most resembles these lines. Compare especially:

> Invivem moechos anus arrogantis
> Flebis in solo levis angiportu,
> Thracio bacchante magis sub inter-
> lunia vento,

Cum tibi flagrans amor et libido,
Quae solet matres furiare equorum,
Saeviet circa iecur ulcerosum,
Non sine questu.

Wyatt may well have had these lines somewhere at the back of his head, but he has altogether transcended his original. *Plaining in vain unto the moon* arouses our imagination far more than the rather melodramatic raging of the Thracian wind in the moonless nights in Horace, while the pregnant reticence of *thy wishes then dare not be told*, makes Horace's brutal frankness look weak.

27. E MS. *night*, either uninflected plural or a mistake. D MS. has *nights*, which I print.

34. BLAME NOT MY LUTE (D). Like the last, this song must have been popular, because it was adapted to a moral purpose in 1565. The adaptation begins:

Blame not my lute though it do sound
The rebuke of your wicked sin.

For the whole, see Nott, p. 528. Though lacking the fire of its companion piece, the present poem has great merit. It is excellently constructed, though in a simple, not a complex manner. It progresses regularly to its climax: there are no sudden shifts or surprises. Wyatt very artfully increases the strength of his accusations. At first he refers to the lady's crime as *thy change*; then a little more strongly but vaguely he refers to *some that use to feign*; then he refers to his rightful spite against her change; in the fourth verse the accusation is direct and made twice—*falsed faith, fault so great*; and in the fifth verse the climax comes with the first words, *Blame but thyself*, so effective because they say what the refrain has

been implying but not stating all along. *Blame but thyself* is thus the positive counterpart of the refrain, and our minds accept it eagerly when the poet gives it us. Very wisely, he does not cheapen it by repetition: the actual refrain remains unaltered throughout.

6. *speaks*, the northern form of the third plural.

20. D MS. reads *to quit*, almost certainly a mistake for *do quit*.

40. *silly*, probably bears here the sense of "simple".

36. SINCE YOU WILL NEEDS (D).

2. *in worth*, "in good part".

7. Cf. Surrey's elegy on Wyatt beginning, "Wyatt resteth here", line 6.

> Whose hammers beat still in that lively brain.

13–14. *Death and despair* are subjects to *decays* and *doth grow*, *grow* being the transitive verb.

25–30. The meaning of this stanza appears to be: "if you grieve to hear the sorrow which you know only through my voice, think what torture it is for me, whose every part suffers, to force myself to sing and my heart to rejoice". *Pleasant game* is clearly ironical.

37. WHAT SHOULD I SAY? (D). Stanza 3 unfortunately lacks the fourth line. Nott, to complete it and to get some sort of sense, emended *though* in the first line to *thought* and invented a fourth line. His version (which has been generally adopted, except by Miss Foxwell, who simply prints the MS. version with lacuna) runs:

> Thought for to take,
> It is not my mind;
> But to forsake
> [One so unkind].

Nott had, I feel, no business to emend *though* to *thought* unless he had failed to make *though* yield sense. I believe that some kind of sense may be got from the unemended *though*, and quite tentatively and without in the least wishing to suggest that there may not be a number of better possibilities, I would read for the fourth line what I have printed in the text. The sense of the stanza as I print it would be: "It is not blindness that causes me to forsake you and not to take you as my own; I see quite plainly, so much so that as I find you, so will I trust you. I find you unjust, and so farewell."

22–27. These lines are best taken as one sentence, but absence of punctuation in the MS. makes certainty impossible. The sense would be: "Can you deny that you said you would always obey me and that you betrayed me before I was aware?"

38. IN ETERNUM (D and E). This is one of the half-dozen or so best pieces Wyatt wrote and perhaps the most deeply felt of them all. The slow march of the lines, the solemn chime of the refrain with the varied use to which it is put, and above all the curious restraint of statement—his references to the faithless woman are the shortest and vaguest—give a wonderful impression of underlying feeling. There is hardly a word of open reproach, but the lover has cast his lady so thoroughly from him that he can call her nothing more than *the thing that I might like* and *that I had first determed for the best.* There is not a word about the lady's deceit; he merely says *as me-thought* twice, with the bare hint that her falseness had deceived him. Again the vagueness of *another thought* in the last line but one has great power.

1. *determed*: so probably the E MS., but not quite certainly. Only the last few letters of each line are preserved in the E MS., and unluckily in this line the scribe is less clear than in the rest. D MS. has *determined*: but "determ" was a fairly common by-form of "determine" in Wyatt's day, and it would be strange if he had chosen the form that did not rhyme.

9. *prese*, "press". "I exerted myself to follow this course."

11. Note the more obviously passionate rhythm, as if the recollection of past suffering was for a moment breaking through the restraint the poet had imposed on his mood.

13. *fordered me*, "furthered myself", "advanced".

14–16. "Till, as I thought, my fidelity had won such a position as to be fully assured of remaining in her favour for ever."

18. The first *feeble* should be strongly stressed in reading to make plain the inverted order of the words. The sense of course is, that what is built on feeble ground must, however strong in itself, be feeble also.

21. *kest*, dialectic form of "cast".

23. *thought*. Nott (p. 579) explains as "sweetheart". This is possible, but would not the usual sense of the word be more vivid? *Another thought* would be "hate" or "disdain", and would be more impressive and more in keeping with the rest of the poem through its very vagueness.

39. LONGER TO MUSE (D). There is a sense of drama in this poem. The lover, after thinking over his latest snub (*this refuse*), decides to have done with the business and makes a great show of resolution. In the last verse one can almost see him walk

off to find some other amusement. Nott unaccountably omits the poem.

38. *bekind*, "by kind or nature". Cf. "betimes".

42. *hase*, a form of "has".

40. WITH SERVING STILL (D). For comment, see Introduction, p. 32.

41. TO CAUSE ACCORD (E). "It is not impossible", says Nott with grave caution, "but that Wyatt may have meant in this little whimsical ode to ridicule those conceits in which he had but too often indulged." Wyatt, having a sense of humour, enjoyed satirising the poetic convention he used himself.

42. ALL HEAVY MINDS (E). There is a swift, tremulous movement in the short lines of this song as of a bird singing. The last three stanzas, by reverting to the opening, round the song off. The rhythm of the last stanza sinks beautifully to its close.

25. *thought*, "love".

38. *plain*. The E MS., the only source of the poem, reads *pain*, which I take to be a simple mistake for *plain*, due to careless copying.

43. O GOODLY HAND (E). A good example of how fresh a song Wyatt can make out of how far-fetched a sentiment.

3. *distrast*, "distressed".

8. *departed right*, "separated in just proportion one from another" (Nott).

10. *begone*, "ornamented". *Goodly begone* will mean either "beautifully adorned (with rings, etc.)" or "exquisitely fashioned in itself". Cf. Chaucer, *The Romaunt of the Rose*, 943, "with gold bigoon".

21. *demesne*, "possession".

44. If in the world (E). This short poem, full of variety and surprises, seems peculiarly adapted to the shifting cadences of music. The first five lines express a relucting at destiny; the seventh and eighth, longer and slower, are more resigned; the rest are rather quietly pathetic.

3. *fro*, "forth".

45. Sufficed it not (T). This poem is included to illustrate the free movement Wyatt could achieve in his verse (the pauses in the lines are very artfully varied) and an unusual rhetorical power. Note how skilfully he works up an abrupt climax in the last stanza. In the first stanza the first real pause comes at the end of the third line, in the second stanza midway in the second line, in the third stanza abruptly with *use then my death*.

2. *to-rent*, parallel with *did tear* in line 1. *To-* is the common augmentative prefix.

46. Most wretched heart (E). This poem is clearly autobiographical. According to its place in the E MS. it was probably written in Spain and would refer to the intrigues of Bonner (see Introduction, p. 9). For the Chaucerian poem which Wyatt imitates, see Foxwell, II, p. 121.

14. *tho*, "then".

15. *through*. Nott reads *therewith* unjustifiably. E MS. (the only source) plainly reads *throwghe*. Possibly *it* has dropped out after *throwghe*. If *through* alone is read it must mean "completely".

26. "future expectations are no brighter than past experience".

29. *the last*, i.e. death.

47. From these high hills (E). In the epigram beginning "Of Carthage he" occurs the line,

At Mountzon thus I restless rest in Spain.

Wyatt also wrote a letter from Monzon on October 16, 1537, when he was ambassador in Spain. The present epigram follows closely on "Of Carthage he" in the E MS. Miss Foxwell (II, p. 71) may be right in suggesting that the Pyrenees, which would be visible in the distance from Monzon and which he may have visited from there, inspired the present epigram. That a stanza from Ariosto is a source, as Miss Foxwell suggests, is very doubtful. The resemblances are vague, and Wyatt was perfectly capable of noticing a natural phenomenon and using it as a theme for his verse without going to another poet for his warrant.

This epigram is both beautiful and pointed. The second line has quite a surprising charm and the rest shows a pleasing harmony of sound and sense. There is an aptitude in the implied comparison between the gentle trickling headwaters of the stream and the unnoticed infiltration of love into the mind.

2. *trilleth*, "runs down". See Chaucer, *Summoner's Tale* 156:

> With many a teare trilling on my cheke.

The association of the word with "trickle" was doubtless early: Wyatt may well have thought of "trill" as a variant of "trickle".

4. "till it has flowed past the rapids and falls." *Stream* must mean "fast-flowing stretch". Nott (p. 556) misunderstood *force*, which (with the variant "foss") is simply the north-country word for "waterfall".

6. *source*. Nott (*l.c.*) understands *source* as "impetuous flight" and cites examples from Chaucer of the word bearing this meaning. But

is it not better to understand *ta'en a source* as simply "had its birth"? The comparison would then be between the whole course of a stream from its source and the whole course of love. Nott's explanation would exclude the first half of the poem from the comparison altogether.

48. TAGUS, FAREWELL (E). This epigram refers to Wyatt's return to England after his two years' embassy in Spain.

2. *gold already tried*, "refined gold".

3–6. The sense is not at all easy, although of the editors only Padelford (p. 119) tries to explain it. The poem occurs only in the E MS. and Tottell. There is no punctuation in the MS. to guide us. Tottell, who has emended the poem in several places, gives a full stop at the end of line 6 and commas at the ends of the three previous lines. Miss Foxwell's punctuation makes the last six lines of the epigram unintelligible to me. I take the sense of lines 3–6 to be: "for I go to seek the Thames, whose rich waters flow east (*gainward the sun*) and which flanks the town of London with its curved bank". The east-flowing Thames is contrasted with the west-flowing Tagus. Padelford, p. 119, explains 4 as "resplendent in the sun".

5. *the town that Brutus sought by dreams.* According to the legend, Brutus, the descendant of Aeneas, was directed by Diana in a dream to sail to the white cliffs of Albion and build another Troy, Troynovante, which became London. See Geoffrey of Monmouth, I, chapter 11.

7–8. "My king and country, for whom alone I live, give me the wings of mighty love for making this journey"; or more plainly, "love of king and country gives me wings for my journey".

49. UNDER THIS STONE (H). There is a charming simplicity in this piece mingled, whether deliberately or not, with the true epitaphic platitude. There is a rusticity, recalling all the village churches in England, in the lines

*Which was the shortening of his days*

and

*Most kind always unto his kin.*

But the last two lines show clearly that it was a poet, not a maker of rustic epitaphs, who wrote the piece.

3. *prest*, "ready".

7. "who prevented others doing him any unnecessary service".

11. *let*, "hinder".

50. WHAT RAGE IS THIS? (E). See Introduction, pp. 25, 42. The poem expresses powerful and gloomy feeling. It was probably written in England after Wyatt's return from Spain, and though nominally a love-poem expresses rather his own gloomy feelings at that period. It is interesting to learn from the E MS. that Wyatt revised this poem carefully, making a number of important corrections.

9–10. *that never shall return*, "that never shall turn again into ordinary flesh". In other words, the wound, though cured, will leave its mark for ever.

13. *cure*, "care".

15. *without recure*, "past recovery".

51. THE PILLAR PERISHT IS (T and A). This sonnet is usually taken to refer to the fall of Cromwell, Wyatt's own grief at the event, and his fears for himself (see Introduction, p. 11). Berdan (*Early*

*Tudor Poetry*, pp. 470–1) thinks it, however, a mere early exercise, a very feeble adaptation from Petrarch. (The sonnet of Petrarch which Wyatt adapts is given in Nott, p. 544, Foxwell, I, p. 206.) "Since", says Berdan, "Wyatt had in no way been responsible for Cromwell's fate, it is hard to understand why he should hate himself." I do not agree with Berdan. The competent versification clearly signifies that the sonnet was written late, not early. Wyatt has departed considerably from his original, in particular when he says he is

*assigned*
*Dearly to mourn till death do it* (sc. his misfortune) *relent.*

Without definite reason he is hardly likely to have introduced this striking new sentiment about death (which he repeats) and the simplest reason for his thus writing would be the imprisonment he suffered after Cromwell's downfall, when he was in fear of death. It is not true to say that Wyatt was in no way responsible for Cromwell's fall, because the failure of his embassy to Charles was certainly one of the contributing causes of it. That the embassy failed was not Wyatt's fault; but that is no reason why Wyatt should not have blamed himself. Nor can I agree that the sonnet is feeble. It is not polished; there are weaknesses in the wording: but it has the movement that real feeling alone can give.

8. *it*, the *hap* (line 5) that has destroyed his hopes.

52. SIGHS ARE MY FOOD (H). Wyatt, writing from prison in 1541, addresses his friend, the influential courtier Sir Francis Brian. The measure is plainly (and intentionally) mixed: the first three lines are anapaestic; the fourth iambic; the fifth

anapaestic again; the last three iambic, of which the last of all is perfectly regular. The impression given is that of unbearable grief gradually mastered.

2. "The clinking of fetters would demand such music (i.e. sighs and tears) as an accompaniment."

5. Wyatt is in a dungeon below ground. He cannot see out.

7–8. These lines were prophetic. Wyatt was acquitted, but the damage to his health suffered in prison may have hastened his death. The sentiment is repeated in Wyatt's oration to his judges. "These men thinketh it enough to accuse; and, as all these slanderers, use for a general rule, 'Whom thou lovest not, accuse: for though he heal the wound, yet the scar shall remain'." See Nott, p. 291.

53. LUX, MY FAIR FALCON (P). This epigram was written almost certainly when Wyatt was in prison in 1540 awaiting his trial.

1. *Lux*, apparently the name of a falcon.

2–3. The meaning seems to be: "How I should like to see you at liberty, for you do not forsake me in order to benefit yourselves". Wyatt is thinking of the falcon's flight and of its returning to its master instead of deserting him as it might.

6. "How effective a test of character is contained in even a little adversity!"

8. Miss Foxwell omits *and* between *friends* and *so*. *And* is clearly in the P MS., which she follows. Padelford, p. 31, has the line correctly transcribed.

54. WITHIN MY BREAST (T). The title of this epigram in Tottell is, "the lover professeth himself con-

stant", but the sentiments expressed seem rather a repudiation of false faith in general than of false faith in love. There is no reasonable doubt that Wyatt had a strong hatred in his nature of any kind of insincerity. Nott calls the poem obscure but gives no elucidation.

3–4. The meaning seems to be: "Nor did there ever enter into my heart the very disgraceful idea of forging the truth, or of revealing fictitious faults in others." The idea of fabricating lies is contrasted with the idea of suppressing truth contained in lines 5–6.

8. *train*, "enterprise". Wyatt disclaims any faintness of heart.

55. I AM AS I AM (D). This poem seems to be a piece of personal moralising, Stoic in tone, written at a time when Wyatt was or had been in danger from his enemies. *Bond or free* in line 3 may well be a literal reference to Wyatt's own second imprisonment or to the fear of it. That Wyatt was acquainted with the Stoic philosophy is likely from his references to Seneca. "Farewell, love", he begins a sonnet (Foxwell, I, p. 19) and, he goes on,

> Senec and Plato call me from thy lore.

Writing to his son from Spain, he talks of the "moral philosophers, among whom I would Senec were your study and Epictetus . . . to be ever in your bosom".

11. *since folk will feign*. The connection of this with what goes before is not plain. Why should folks' feigning make Wyatt *use the mean*? I suppose one must take *since folk will feign* to refer to something implied but not stated. "I must tell you the truth, since people will tell lies."

13–15. "People think variously; some that I am happy, others that I am unhappy; but they know nothing about it."

17. *decay* apparently bears the sense of "fail".

56. THROUGHOUT THE WORLD (T). The nearest approach in Wyatt to an epigram in the modern sense.

57. IF THOU WILT MIGHTY BE (T). An adaptation from three passages in Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (III, 5; III, 6; III, 3). Wyatt in weight and solemnity easily excels his original. The second stanza rises to positive grandeur. One naturally links this poem with the Satires and Psalms, but out of these only one passage (*Satires*, II, 70–9), of similar moral tone, is worthy to be compared poetically.

9. *thy ground and thy beginning* refers not to the foundation of moral principles and belief, but to the origin of man. The argument of the stanza is that as God created the glory of the moon and stars, so He created each man to fulfil as noble a function, if man will but keep his nature free.

15. *all were it so thou had*, "although it were to happen that thou hadst".

18. *precious*, a trisyllable.

19–21. *thy covetise . . . death profet.* The sense is difficult. One would be apt to conjecture that *biting* was corrupt and to emend it to some word like *getting*, but for the Latin from which Wyatt adapts. These lines represent the following from Boethius:

> Nec cura mordax deserit superstitem
> Defunctumque leves non comitantur opes.

Here *mordax* clearly suggested Wyatt's *biting*, though equally clearly *biting* is a noun, not an

adjective, and has in sense nothing to do with the Latin original. I cannot see any plausible explanation of *biting*, but the meanings of "consuming" or "slandering" would yield sense of a sort. "Your greed of gain and busy consuming of wealth would still never leave your wretched life in peace, nor profit you after death at all."

58. From the first satire (E). See Introduction, p. 48. These are lines 80–104 (the end) of the Satire.

1. *this* refers to what has just been said, namely that Wyatt cannot bear the hypocrisy of the court.

6. *these news*, presumably the news of the court that Poins, his correspondent, has been sending him.

7. *sauf*, "save". The *clog* refers to Wyatt's being in the custody of his father for a time, after his release from prison in 1536.

11. *saffry*, "savoury".

17. *they beasts do so esteem*, "they think so highly of beasts that they think fit to make beasts of themselves". E MS. reads *beeste*, apparently a simple mistake.

59. The second satire (E).

3. *livelood*, "livelihood".

14. *when her*. E MS. reads *wher*, which does not make sense. A MS. and Tottell emend to *when her*.

26. *cater*, "caterer, purveyor".

31. *maketh but a jape*, "makes light of".

32–5. "Trusting so to arrange things with her sister that she might share her wealth and, if her health lasted, live a lady all her life." In line 35 Wyatt forgets that the *that* of the previous line is waiting for its verb, and alters the construction.

48. *purpose*, "conversation".

53. *steaming*, "flaming". In Middle English "steem" = "flame" as well as "vapour".

55. *for though the unwise*. E MS. is incomplete, stopping after *for though*. A MS. and Tottell read *for the unwise*. *Though* seems necessary to the sense; it has the best MS. authority: I have therefore retained it and added Tottell's emendation to complete the sense.

60. E MS. has *not* for *no*, apparently a mistake.

64. *silly*, "foolish".

68. *poor surety*, "the security which she derived from her poverty" (Nott).

75–9. Nott is probably right in thinking that Wyatt had here in mind Horace, *Odes*, II, 16. Cf. in particular lines 6–12:

> otium . . .
> non gemmis neque purpura venale neque auro.
> Non enim gazae neque consularis
> summovet lictor miseros tumultus
> mentis et curas laqueata circum
> tecta volantis.

"The classical allusions in this passage", says Nott (p. CXLV), "lost nothing by being accommodated to the circumstances of Wyatt's own time. The Lictor, and his fasces, would have presented but a trite allusion to commonplace learning, and could not have produced any great effect upon the mind: but the King, surrounded by all the pomp and circumstance of power, his head, 'Hooped with gold', and the serjeant of his guard, with the various insignia of his office, keeping watch over the entrance to the presence chamber, yet unable to exclude the intrusion of care and sorrow, and mental suffering, present a

picture the truth and beauty of which cannot but be felt by every one."

86. *breers*, "briars".

88. *hay*, "hunting-net".

92. *knotted*, "entangled".

93–4. *bare from all affects* etc., "free from all passions that vice has ever defiled".

100. "You are mad if you continue to be wretched, knowing that happiness is to be found within your mind." Read *cóntinue*.

101. *gape on*, "have a longing for".

103. *all and some*, "everything".

105–112. Nott saw here an adaptation from Persius, *Satires*, III, 35–8:

> Magne pater divum, saevos punire tyrannos
> Haud alia ratione velis, cum dira libido
> Moverit ingenium ferventi tincta veneno,
> Virtutem videant, intabescantque relicta.

60. THE SIXTH PENITENTIAL PSALM (E).

2. *heartes*, probably a dissyllable. Cf. line 19.

3. *of darkness deep repair*, "the deep dwelling-place of darkness".

4. *borrow*, "pledge" or "security".

24. *pretence*, "the cause I have for claiming merit".

# INDEX TO FIRST LINES


| | No. | Page |
|---|---|---|
| A face that should content me wondrous well | 7 | 67 |
| Ah, my heart, ah, what aileth thee | 23 | 86 |
| Ah, Robin | 26 | 90 |
| All heavy minds | 42 | 111 |
| And wilt thou leave me thus? | 9 | 69 |
| At most mischief | 24 | 87 |
| Blame not my lute, for he must sound | 34 | 101 |
| Disdain me not without desert | 10 | 70 |
| Divers doth use, as I have heard and know | 19 | 81 |
| Forget not yet the tried entent | 12 | 72 |
| From depth of sin and from a deep despair | 60 | 136 |
| From these high hills as when a spring doth fall | 47 | 118 |
| I abide and abide and better abide | 18 | 80 |
| I am as I am and so will I be | 55 | 126 |
| If in the world there be more woe | 44 | 114 |
| If thou wilt mighty be, flee from the rage | 57 | 129 |
| If with complaint the pain might be exprest | 35 | 103 |
| In eternum I was once determed | 38 | 106 |
| Is it possible? | 11 | 71 |
| It may be good, like it who list | 1 | 59 |
| Longer to muse | 39 | 107 |
| Lux, my fair falcon, and your fellows all | 53 | 124 |
| Madame, withouten many words | 8 | 68 |
| Marvel no more although | 25 | 89 |
| Most wretched heart, most miserable | 46 | 116 |
| My galley charged with forgetfulness | 5 | 65 |
| My hope, alas, hath me abused | 29 | 94 |
| My love is like unto th' eternal fire | 6 | 66 |
| My lute awake! perform the last | 33 | 99 |
| My mother's maids, when they did sew and spin | 59 | 131 |
| O goodly hand | 43 | 113 |
| Patience, though I have not | 15 | 75 |
| Perdie, I said it not | 4 | 63 |
| Sighs are my food, drink are my tears | 52 | 123 |
| Since love will needs that I shall love | 16 | 76 |
| Since you will needs that I shall sing | 36 | 104 |

| | No. | Page |
|---|---|---|
| Spite hath no power to make me sad | 32 | 98 |
| Sufficed not, madame, that you did tear | 45 | 115 |
| Tagus, farewell, that westward with thy stream | 48 | 119 |
| Take heed betime, lest ye be spied | 2 | 60 |
| Tangled I was in love's snare | 22 | 84 |
| Th' en'my of life, decayer of all kind | 31 | 97 |
| The pillar perisht is whereto I leant | 51 | 122 |
| There was never nothing more me pained | 14 | 74 |
| They flee from me that sometime did me seek | 13 | 73 |
| This maketh me at home to hunt and to hawk | 58 | 130 |
| Though I cannot your cruelty constrain | 27 | 91 |
| Throughout the world if it were sought | 56 | 128 |
| To cause accord or to agree | 41 | 110 |
| To wish and want and not obtain | 28 | 92 |
| Under this stone there lieth at rest | 49 | 120 |
| What death is worse than this | 30 | 96 |
| What no, perdie, ye may be sure! | 20 | 82 |
| What rage is this? what furour of what kind? | 50 | 121 |
| What should I say? | 37 | 105 |
| When first mine eyes did view and mark | 21 | 83 |
| Within my breast I never thought it gain | 54 | 125 |
| With serving still | 40 | 109 |
| Wyatt resteth here that quick could never rest | 61 | 138 |
| Ye know my heart, my lady dear | 17 | 78 |
| Your looks so often cast | 3 | 61 |


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